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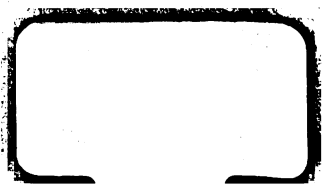
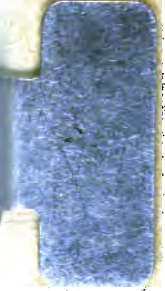
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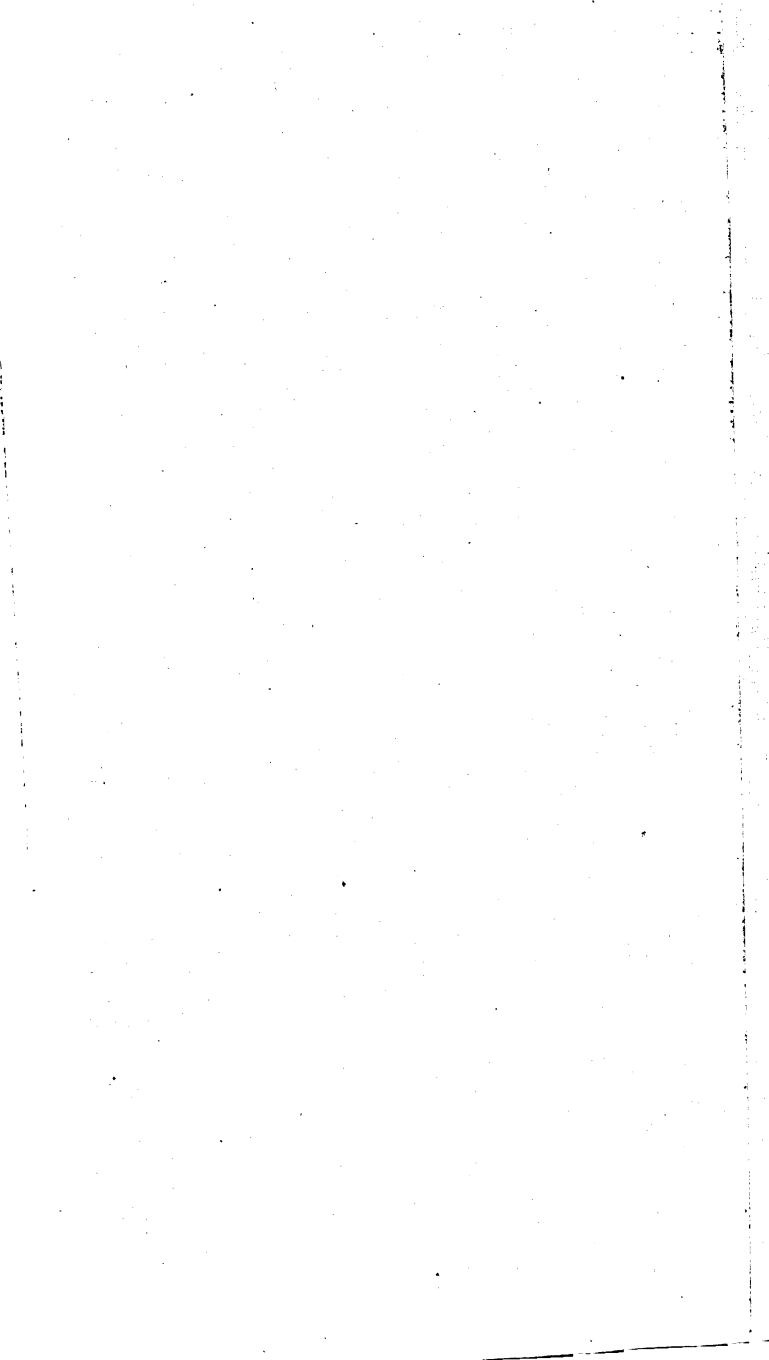
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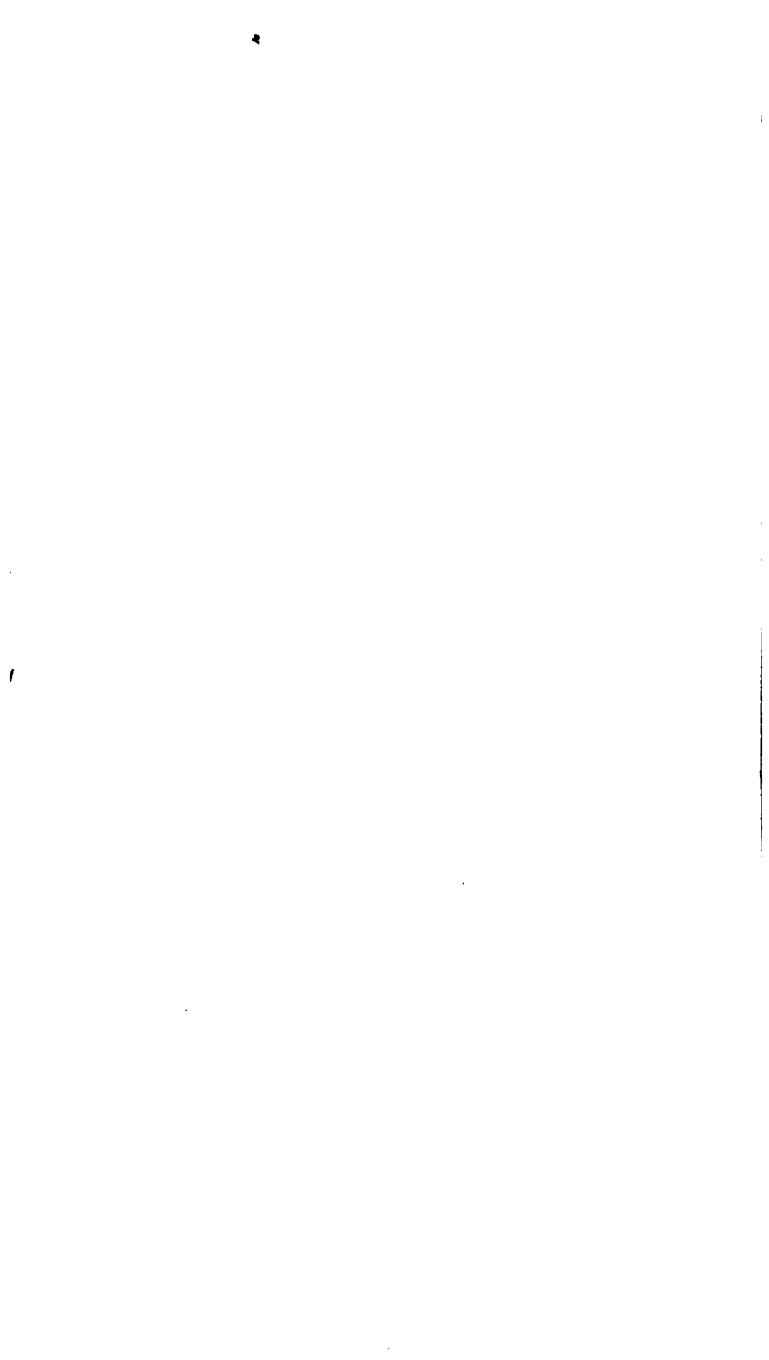


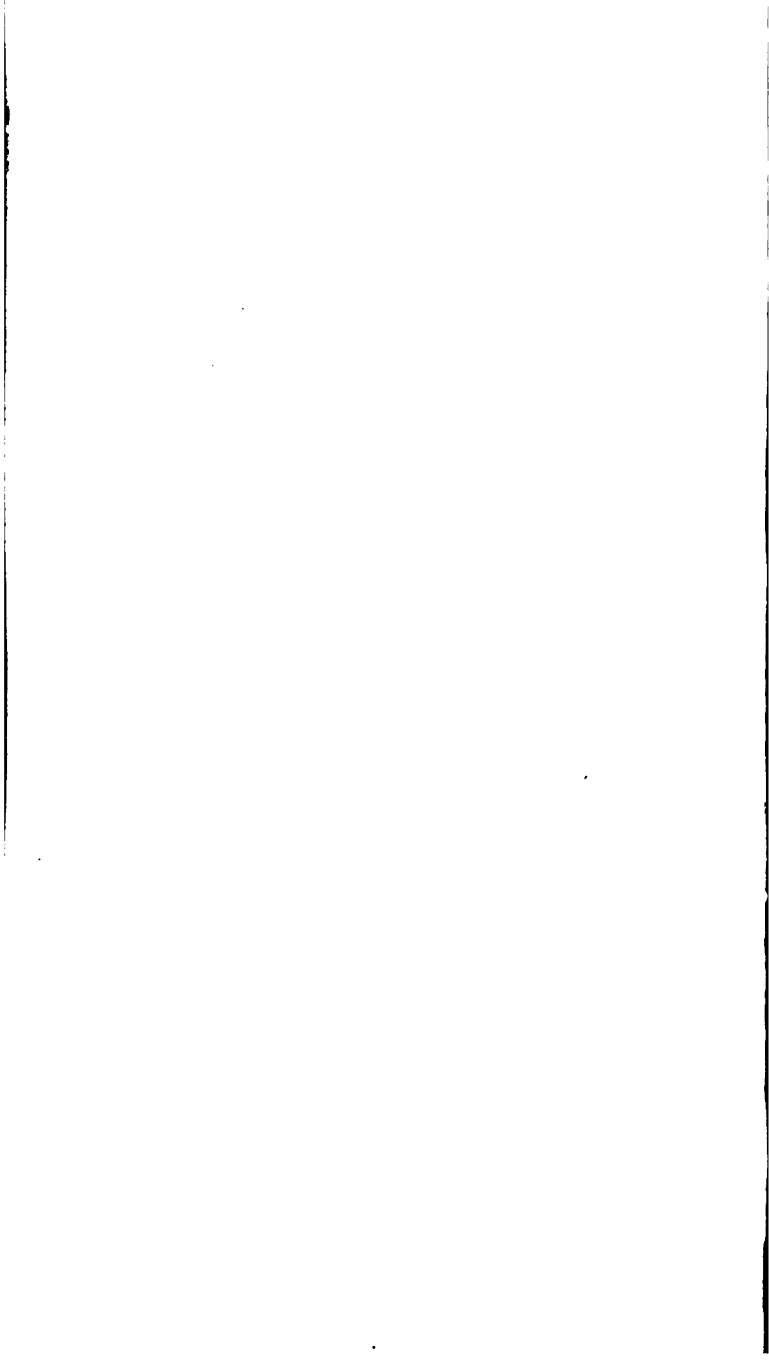
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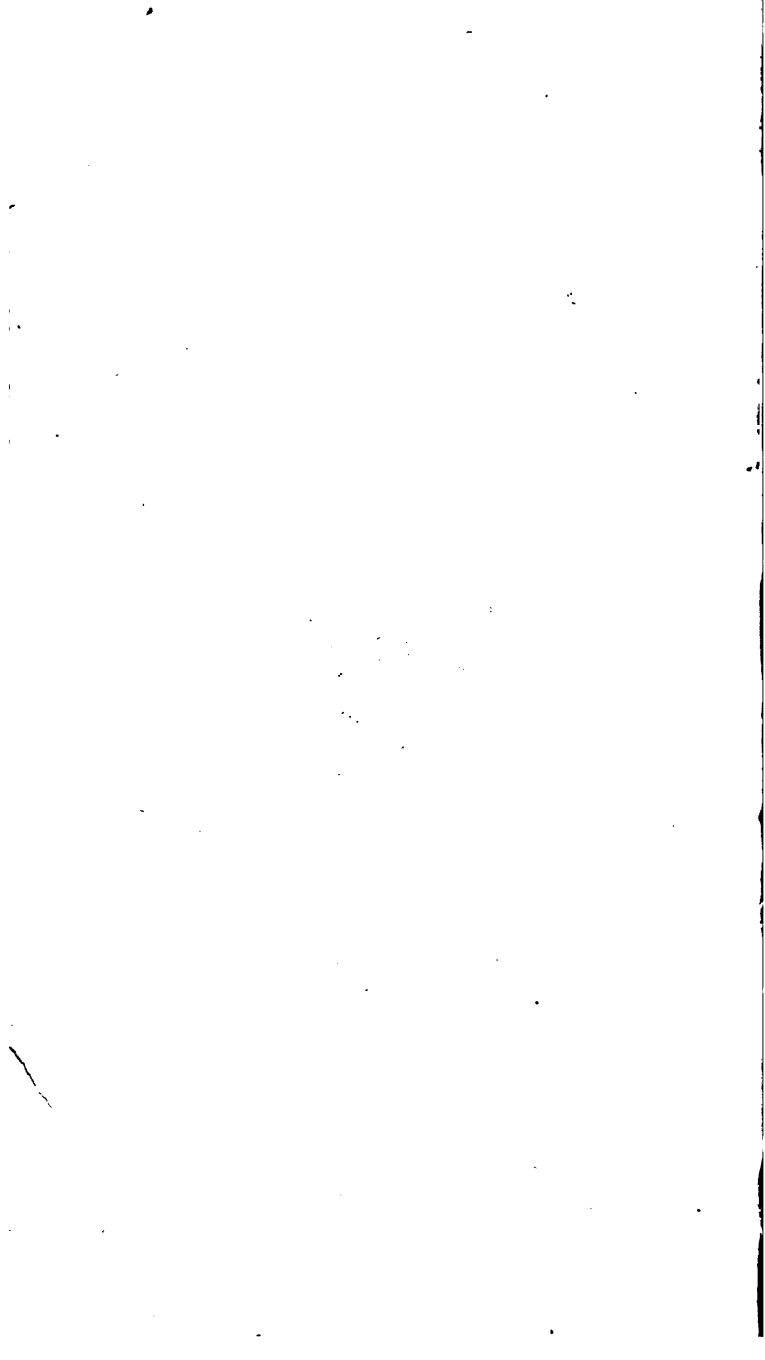
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P E R S I A.

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FUTTEH ALI SHAH,
King of Persia.

PERSIA;

CONTAINING

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY,

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF ITS

GOVERNMENT, LAWS, AND RELIGION,

AND OF THE

**CHARACTER, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, ARTS, AMUSE-
MENTS, &c. OF ITS INHABITANTS.**

BY FREDERICK SHOBERL.

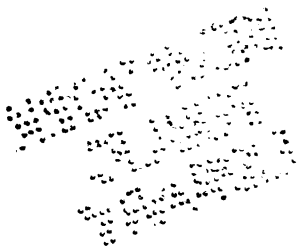
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PREFACE.

THE country to which this volume relates, is one of those which possesses the double interest of ancient and modern celebrity. Situated near, if not actually embracing the cradle of the human race, Persia was, according to the concurrent testimony of tradition and history, at an early period of the world a powerful empire. The ineffectual struggles of its despotic rulers to enslave the independent republics of Greece, and its rapid subjugation by the Macedonian conqueror, occupy a very prominent place in the annals of antiquity: while its reduction by the disciples of Mahomet, the many subsequent invasions of barbarous marauders, its frequent hostilities with Turkey, and the commercial relations which long subsisted between Persia and some of the European States, have in more recent ages rendered it an object of curiosity and attention.

Little, however, was done, till near the close of the seventeenth century, towards making the western world acquainted with a country, with the name of which all that is most attractive, elegant, and tender, in oriental literature, romance, and poetry, is intimately associated. The work of the accurate Chardin then removed much of the profound obscurity in which the character and manners of the Persians were enveloped. That writer

continued to be the only authority on those subjects till the commencement of the present century, since which the assiduity bestowed by our countrymen on the study of the language and letters of Persia, our frequent intercourse with that country, the repeated embassies sent to its sovereign, and the travels, researches, and labours of an Ouseley, Malcolm, Morier, Kinnier, Scott, Waring and Porter, have furnished nearly as complete notions respecting the government, laws, manners, customs and character of the people of this empire, as we possess relative to those of any European nation.

The reader will naturally conclude that in the compilation of this volume, the valuable sources of information enumerated above, have not been overlooked. To Mr. Morier's truly interesting narratives of his two journeys, and the recent costly publication of Sir Robert Ker Porter, he professes to owe particular obligations. A correct portraiture of costume and character is given in the engravings, some of which are executed from original designs by Persian artists.

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P E R S I A.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

ANTIQUITY OF THE KINGDOM OF PERSIA—ITS RECENT LOSSES—
SITUATION AND PROVINCES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.

THE foundation of the kingdom of Persia, which the Orientals call Iran, dates back beyond the historic ages of Asia, and consequently of the whole world. Though we cannot fix with any degree of certainty the period of the establishment of the four fire-worshipping dynasties anterior to the invasion of the Musulmans, still it seems indubitable from documents recently discovered in various Persian historians, that those dynasties were preceded by several others. Notwithstanding the obscurity in which this subject is enveloped, there is every reason to suppose, that under these most ancient dynasties the Persians maintained a close intercourse with the inhabitants of upper Hindoostan, or even sent a colony to that country: for it would appear that the Persians and Hindoos then had the same political system, professed the same religion, and spoke the same language. Hence, doubtless, arise the numerous coincidences that are to be found between the Zend, or ancient Persian language, and the Sanskrit, the sacred language of the Brahmins.

According to the Persians the appellation of Iran is as ancient as the reign of Feridoun, one of their earliest monarchs. This great prince, whose empire had no other bounds than the globe, divided his dominions among his three sons, Salem, Touran, and Iradj. To the first he allotted Asia Minor, Africa and Europe; to the second the countries lying beyond the Djihoun; to the third, who was his favourite, the space comprised between the Djihoun and the Euphrates, the Indian Ocean and the Caspian Sea. These different kingdoms were named after their princes, and Persia was called Iran, either after Iradj, who was also named Iran, or after his mother Iran-dokt. The countries beyond the Oxus received the denomination of Touran. Such is the origin of the names of Iran and Touran, which so frequently occur in oriental authors. This partition bears a striking re-

semblance to that of Noah, who divided the earth between his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet.

Whatever hand the imagination or the national vanity of the Persians may have had in this etymology, so much at least is certain, that the term Iran is of very high antiquity: it occurs in the Sassanian inscriptions on the monuments of Nakshee Roustam, in the sacred books of the Parsees, where it is sometimes written Earaneh, and is probably the Eilam of the Bible, a name which seems to designate Persia.

We have no authentic information at what period the communication between Persia and Hindoostan alluded to above was broken off, no doubt in consequence of one of those revolutions so frequent in this country. The last, occasioned by the fall of the Sofys, (a dynasty thus named because it was established by Ismael, a monk of the order of the Sofys) was protracted from the commencement of the eighteenth century to 1799: in that year Baba-Khan was acknowledged king by the name of Feth-Ali Shah, at Teheran, the present capital of Persia, situated in the province of Mazanderan, about forty miles from the Caspian Sea. He seated himself on a throne raised by his uncle Aga Mohammed, who, however, was unable to extend Iran to its ancient limits: for the present dynasty of the Cadjars, a wandering tribe which roves with its numerous herds in the vast uncultivated plains of Persia, does not possess the whole of the countries subject to the unfortunate dynasty of the Sofys, which became extinct in 1739, in the person of Abbas III. whom Nadir Shah put to death after making a tool of him to promote his own ambitious views. Three extensive provinces, each of which would form a kingdom, Khorasan, Candahar, and Georgia, have been rent from the empire. It must, however, be admitted that the sovereigns of Iran never were in peaceable possession of the two out of these three provinces, which now seem to be irrecoverably lost to their sceptre. It is well known with what obstinacy the Grand Moguls contested the possession of Candahar with the Persians, who were not always successful enough to repulse the Indian armies. An officer of the too renowned Nadir Shah, restored harmony between the competitors. Ahmed Shah, having made himself master of that mountainous province and the adjacent countries, there founded the kingdom of the Afghans, which is daily becoming more enlarged and consolidated. In the west, Georgia, situated between Turkey and Persia, had been ever since the loss of its independence, a bone of contention with those two powers. Weary of their incursions and their endless quarrels, the nominal prince of that ill-fated country threw himself into the arms of Russia. Heraclius in 1783 declared Paul I. his heir, and according to this dis-

position, Georgia became, at his death, in 1800, a Russian province, by the name of Grusia. We are well aware what advantage Russia is likely to derive from the acquisition of a province, which at present, indeed, is a burden to her: but it is equally obvious that so long as she retains this province she cannot reckon upon the cordial friendship of a power interposed between her and Hindoostan. It is certain, moreover, that the total produce of Georgia is not equivalent to the immense profits which the Russians would derive from a free and uninterrupted commerce with the Afghans, the people of Cashmere, and even the Hindoos. England, at any rate, may congratulate herself upon it, as a new pledge of the tranquillity and security of her vast Indian empire.

The sovereignty of Khorasan has been for ages disputed with Persia by the Usbecks, who never either wholly subdued or were wholly dispossessed of it. Their invasions of that beautiful province, and the exploits of the Persian warriors against the Tartars who frequently passed the Djihoun, as they still continue to do, have furnished a theme to many of their poets, and the celebrated Firdousee with the subject of an epic containing 120,000 verses. The *Shah Nameh* (book of Kings) has been famous for upwards of eight centuries throughout all the East, and is justly considered as the masterpiece of Persian poetry.

If, however, the Persians have been frequently disturbed in the possession of Khorasan, they have never wholly lost that rich and extensive province: and according to their own accounts, they have again reduced great part of it, which they will retain till a fresh invasion of the Usbecks.

Notwithstanding the loss of these important possessions, the kingdom of Persia still extends from 26° to 40° north latitude, and from 45° to 61° east longitude, being upwards of 1000 miles in length, and 600 in breadth.

Modern Persia therefore comprehends Fars, Irak Adjemy, Louristan, Kuzistan, part of Kurdistan, Adherbijan, Ghilan, Mazanderan, the western parts of Khorasan, including the cities of Meshed, Nishapour, and Turkish, and the west part of Kerman and its capital.



CHAPTER II.

ASPECT AND NATURE OF THE SOIL—CLIMATE—POPULATION.

DEAD flats, fu'ly exposed to the intense heat of the sun and covered with burning sand; successive ranges of mountains, some covered with trees, some with snow, others presenting bare masses of rock, separated by spacious valleys; vast uncultivated

plains, destitute of water; deserts still more extensive, impregnated with marine salt; exhibiting throughout traces of destructive revolutions; ruined towns, uninhabited villages, here and there delicious vales, rich pasturage, and gardens producing abundance of fruit of all kinds: such is the general appearance of Persia, which is justly termed the country of mountains. Which way soever the traveller directs his course, whether he lands on the parched shore of the Persian Gulf, or braves the scorching sky of the plains of Babylonia, or comes from the wet and temperate borders of the Caspian Sea; before he reaches the centre of the kingdom, he has to climb the most elevated rocks by narrow roads bordered with precipices; to encounter the extremes of heat and cold; to defy hordes of banditti who infest the whole country; to endure want of water and provisions; to expose himself at night to the inclemencies of the air, perhaps without any other shelter than a ruinous caravanserai, open on all sides, but most commonly his clothes and cloak alone. On reaching this central region his eye wanders over cultivated tracts, populous towns, numerous villages embosomed in forests of palm-trees, defended by ditches, mud walls, and a few brick towers. This description, however, must be understood to apply solely to the most populous districts, and the immediate environs of large cities, such as Teheran, Ispahan, Shiraz, &c.

Besides the mountains which intersect the interior of Persia in all directions, branches of the Taurus encompass it on the north, west and south. The Taurus, after traversing Armenia and Adherbijan, after uniting on the one hand with ramifications of the Caucasus, and forming on the other the various ranges of Media, skirts the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, and constitutes that lofty barrier which separates Ghilan and Mazanderan from the central provinces. Mount Zagros, which runs parallel to the course of the Tigris, stretches to the east of Shuster, enters Louristan, coasts the Persian Gulf at some distance from the sea, and terminates beneath its waters below Gomboon. A few leagues from Hamadan, the Alwend, the ancient Orontes, divides into two branches; the one, running north-east, passes to the west of Casbin, and unites to the south-west of the Caspian Sea with the Elborz, which is a continuation of the Taurus; the other, pursuing a contrary direction and joining the ramifications of the Zagros, forms the highlands of Louristan and Persia, or the snow-covered mountains inhabited by the Bakhtiaree and the Louree tribes.

From this disposition of the grand features of the country results the variety of temperature. The shores of the Persian Gulf, the Kermanshah, for instance, are uninhabitable in sum-

mer. From the 15th of June to the 15th of August, the season of extreme heat in that country, blows the malignant *sam-yel*, whose breath, swift as lightning, is equally destructive. The inhabitants then forsake the villages and repair to the mountains, where they abide till the return of a temperature that is supportable. The northern provinces, Mazanderan and Ghilan, refreshed by the winds that regularly blow from the Caspian Sea and are repelled by the mountains, enjoy a temperate climate in winter as well as summer. Here the atmosphere is cooler, and the vegetables are succulent; mountains clothed with wood remind the European of the Alps and the Pyrennees; but as he rises from these low tracts, in his progress to the central platform of Persia, the wind becomes colder, the productions of the earth are changed, and he would almost imagine that he was transported into some distant region. Thus the variation of climate depends more on the elevation of the soil than the difference of latitude; so that you may pass in a few hours from the climate of Montpellier, to that of Siberia. The order of the seasons is nearly as follows:

From the middle of May, to the end of September, the heat is excessive along the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, in the Kuzistan, the deserts of Kerman, and even in some parts of the interior, as at Teheran. The summers are generally temperate in tracts of middling elevation. Mr. Kinnier found the mountains covered with snow in July 1810, and the cold was so severe in some of the valleys between Shiraz and Ispahan, that two or three blankets were scarcely sufficient to protect him from it in the night. The winter nevertheless generally begins in November and lasts till March. To the north of Shiraz, in the vicinity of Teheran and Tabriz, that season is very cold, and frequently interrupts for months the communication between those cities and their dependencies. From May till September, the atmosphere is serene, and cooled by the breezes which blow morning and evening.

One striking peculiarity of Persia, is, that a kingdom of such extent contains not a single navigable river, to impart fertility to the country and to facilitate the communication between its different provinces. All the mountains, excepting those which run parallel to the Gulf and the Caspian Sea, are destitute of trees, the hills exhibiting nothing but bare and dreary crags. In summer no refreshing dew gives moisture to vegetation, no vapour veils the face of heaven, no fog hovers over the hills. Notwithstanding this general drought, the soil richly remunerates the toil of the cultivator. Wherever despotism has not wholly paralysed the energies of man, and wherever he seconds by his industry the bountiful dispositions of Nature, the earth produces

abundance of exquisite fruit and succulent plants. Wheat, barley, millet, rice, grow almost every where. Melons and culinary vegetables of all sorts are plentiful and excellent. The grapes of Basan, the dates of Kerman, the pomegranates and figs of Yezd, the plumbs of Khorasan, the pistachio-nuts of Casbin, the pears, apples, oranges, and quinces, of Mazanderan—in short, almost all the fruits of Europe, and many which we have not, are of exquisite flavour. From September to the end of April, Mazanderan is covered with flowers and fruit. The jessamine, the carnation, the tulip, the anemone, the hyacinth, the lily, the myrtle, surpass in the splendour, the variety, the richness and the purity of their colours, and in their exquisite perfume, the most renowned productions of the kind that the West can boast of. The queen of the garden, the constant object of the tender love and the melodious strains of the nightingale, the rose, whose charms, whose blandishments, and whose fickleness have been described in harmonious verse by the most eminent Persian poets, here attains unrivalled luxuriance and beauty: and after adorning the gardens in the spring, she comes in the form of an ethereal essence to charm Europeans and Asiatics with her perfume.

Among the productions of another class we find silk, wool and goats' and camels' hair: these supply the Persian manufactures, by which they are converted into rich stuffs, costly and ordinary carpets, and garments of all kinds, and form the most important branch of the commerce of Persia with the East. We also meet with cotton, inferior indeed to that of India, but superior to the Turkish, madder, sugar, manna, asphaltum, naphtha, tutty, bezoar and gum-dragon.

If not more than a twentieth part of Persia be now under cultivation, the fault lies not so much in Nature as in the inhabitants. Let the religion of the Persians, like that of their ancestors, impose on them the duty of propagating their own species, useful animals and all the vegetables necessary to *mān*; let the peace of the kingdom rest on a solid basis, and agriculture and commerce will flourish and mutually support each other. The ancient canals will be repaired and new ones dug; the rain or snow water, collected in the ravines and valleys, and judiciously employed, will fertilize the land. Success will give a fresh impulse to exertion, the valleys will be covered with willows, sycamores, poplars, and lime-trees; the fields with rich crops of cotton, Turkey corn, and tobacco; and the whole country with vegetables. The heat will then decrease, the atmosphere become more damp and rain more frequent: the number of springs and streams will increase, and Nature will from day to day become more and more profuse of her bounty.

CHAPTER III.

POPULATION—NAMES, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF SOME OF THE TRIBES OF PERSIA.

PERSIA has been overrun alternately by the Gaznevdes, the Karizmians, Togrul's Seljuks, Jenghis Khan's Moguls, Tamerlane's Tartars, the Turcomans, the Usbecks, the Afghans, the Courds, &c. These successive invasions could not fail to produce such a mixture in the population, that it would now be difficult to find the Persian blood in its original purity.

Chardin estimated the population of Persia at forty millions of souls: Kinnier considers this number as overrated, and doubts whether the space between the Euphrates and Indus could furnish more than eighteen or twenty millions. This population, be its number what it will, may be divided into two classes: the stationary inhabitants, or those resident in towns and villages, and the migratory or wandering tribes.

The native Persians, who style themselves *That* or *Tadjik*, are a medley of all nations, Arabs, Guebres, and Jews, who have voluntarily or by compulsion embraced the religion of Mahomet.

The Eelauts, or wandering tribes, constitute the military force and the most considerable part of the population of the empire: their chiefs, to whom they are blindly devoted, form its hereditary nobility. They are mostly of Turkish origin, speak the Turkish language, and retain the custom of their ancestors, the Scythians. The tribes of the southern provinces, such as the Bakhtiarees, the Faelees, and the Mamassounees, date their origin from the most remote antiquity; and they may be considered as the descendants of those savage hordes which dwelt in the same parts in the time of Alexander. It appears that when they first settled in the kingdom, certain tracts were allotted to them for a limited time, and at a certain rent: long possession has given them a right of property, and their chiefs are regarded as the owners of the districts in which they reside.

Almost all these tribes lead a pastoral life. Some of them have fixed habitations, but they are mostly rovers. The latter, however, have districts to which they confine themselves. They live in tents surrounded with mats, and covered with coarse black cloth. In winter they reside in the plains; but in summer they move about in quest of pasturage, retiring during the intense heats to the summits and slopes of mountains. In winter some of these tribes, such as the Karaguzloo and the Afshars, dwell in villages. In Daghistan, at Asterabad, and in the

northern part of Khorasan, they have small portable wooden huts instead of tents. They subsist chiefly on the produce of their flocks and herds, pay of course very little attention to agriculture, and are almost utter strangers to the mechanic arts, though they make cloth and various other articles for their own use.

The wandering tribes collectively are divided into four great classes, according to the language which they speak, and from which they are denominated.

1. The *Turkish language* is the most numerous: it comprises 41 families or branches, and 428,000 persons. The Afshars and the Cadjars are the most powerful of these tribes. The former are spread over all Persia, but especially in Adherbijan, and amount to about 28,000 souls. The Cadjars dwell in Mazanderan, at Teheran, at Meru in Khorasan, at Erivan, and at Guindjeh: their number is estimated at 40,000. Feth Ali Shah, the reigning sovereign of Persia, is of this tribe, to which most of the great officers of the empire also belong.

2. The *Courd language* embraces nine families, and numbers about 79,000 individuals. To this class belonged the celebrated Kerim Khan, whose tribe, the Zends, has been almost exterminated since the tragical end of Lootf Ali; the few survivors being in some measure proscribed by the reigning dynasty, and living concealed, or out of the kingdom.

3. The *Louree language* has six families, and comprises 84,500 persons. The numerous tribes of the Faeleees and Bakhtiarees form part of it. The latter supply the army with the best infantry, but inhabiting, like the former, a mountainous tract bordering on Turkey and Persia, they live independent of both powers.

4. The *Arab language*. The tribes of this division are of Arabian extraction. Time, and a long residence in a foreign country, have caused them to lose much of the language of their forefathers; so that they now speak a very corrupt Arabic, mixed with a great number of Persian words. This division comprehends eight families, and 93,500 souls.

Thus the total population furnished by the different families here enumerated, amounts to about 685,500 persons; but in this estimate are included only the tribes that are best known, while many others, concerning which we have no positive information, are wholly omitted.

Each of the principal tribes is divided into several *tiraz*, or branches, all having their respective chiefs, subordinate to the supreme chieftain of the tribe. These chiefs are, as to birth and the power they possess, the highest personages of the state; hence the king is anxious to keep them about him, by giving

them offices at his court, that he may hold some pledge for the fidelity of their tribes: and as they are in general extremely jealous, and of a martial disposition, he consults his own security, and that of the empire, by habitually fomenting quarrels among them, and keeping their power nicely balanced. The son commonly succeeds his father in his dignity; but if he proves himself unworthy of it, it is transferred to the younger brother.

It has been just observed, that the military force of Persia resides in these tribes: their fondness for war, and their intrepidity, form the safeguard of the kingdom, when it is not convulsed by the spirit of rebellion, which too often seizes them. They all pay tribute, and are bound to furnish the king with succours in the wars in which he is engaged: each tribe being obliged to assemble at the first summons, and to bring into the field a quota proportionate to its number. To establish some order in regard to this point, a register, containing the number and names of the persons belonging to each tribe, is kept at court. Towards the festival of the No-rooz, the chiefs come to take the king's orders; if he requires their services for the year which is then about to commence, they remain in the royal camp: if he has no occasion for them, each contingent returns to its district, and receives its stipulated pay. This practice has existed from time immemorial.

Let us now proceed to the nations not of the Mahometan religion, dwelling in Persia. The Guebres are a remnant of the ancient Persians, who have retained the fire-worship and the doctrine of Zoroaster, amid all the revolutions which have so frequently changed the face of their country. In Chardin's time, but a small number of them remained: the late wars have nearly completed their extermination: the villages which they inhabited to the south of Ispahan are swept away, and a few families, which escaped death, have sought refuge at Yezd, and in Kerman. Kinnier informs us, that there are still at Yezd four hundred Guebre families, who groan under the tyranny of Persian agents. Each family pays a capitation-tax of twenty piastres, and is nevertheless liable to all sorts of extortions.

The Christians settled in Persia, are mostly Armenian schismatics, and chiefly dwell in the northern provinces. Their patriarch resides at the convent of Etschamiazin, near Erivan. These Armenians, so opulent under the Sofys, and especially under Abbas the Great, who planted a colony of them at Julfa, a suburb of Ispahan—the same people who had at one time nearly monopolized the commerce of all Persia and part of its manufactures—now lead most of them a vagrant life, bowed down by oppression and indigence. Julfa, formerly so populous, is now but a heap of ruins, and contains no more than five hun-

dred inhabitants. A *darogah*, appointed by the *beylerbey* or governor of Ispahan, is charged with the office of fleecing these wretched people for the benefit of his master; and it is natural to suppose that he does not neglect his own interest. The tribute which they pay amounts to 15,000 toomauns, (a toomaun is equal to about eighteen shillings) and as much more is squeezed out of them by extortions. Some Armenians are likewise to be met with in Adherbijan, and in the districts of Meragah, Ourmiah, Salmas, Tabriz, Carabagh, and Erivan. Their total number is computed at 60,000 souls, which perhaps exceeds the truth.

The Catholic churches of Nakshivan, and other places in Persian Armenia, no longer exist: the Catholics who live in the kingdom are in very small number, and are natives of India or Turkey.

It is the lot of the Jews in Persia, as in all the rest of the East, to live in degradation, poverty, and contempt. There are Jews at Ispahan, at Shiraz, and at Kashan, in Adherbijan: their number in these different places is estimated at about 35,000. Poverty depresses them more and more, and familiarizes them with vice and infamy. Some of them are artisans, brokers, and usurers; the rest live by selling wines, procuring women, and all sorts of intrigues. Many addict themselves to medicine and magic; and as the populace of all countries have a great deal of credulity, and the Persians, high and low, are subject to that disease of the mind, they derive a great profit from their impostures. The Jewesses gain admittance into the seraglios of which they are the oracles. From them beauty purchases the art and the means of withstanding the ravages of time; the coquette, the gift of pleasing and of exciting love in her tyrant; the female, solicitous to become a mother, the speedy accomplishment of her wishes. They also foretell future events, and sell potions possessing virtues of all kinds, to produce love and hatred, to ruin a rival, and so forth.

These Jews are the most ignorant in the world. Travellers distinguish two classes of them: the one descended from the wretched Samaritan captives, whom the Assyrians carried from Judea during the reign of Hosea, king of Israel, and who were dispersed over Media and Parthia; the other from the Jews who were led into captivity to Babylon. Both wear external marks by which they may be known: these are caps of a particular colour, or square patches of cloth of a different hue from their garments. At Ispahan the Jews are not permitted to wear cloth stockings.

PART I**OF THE GOVERNMENT.****CHAPTER I.****OF THE KING—HIS FAMILY—HIS HOUSEHOLD—HIS REVENUES.**

THE government of Persia is monarchical, and the throne is at present filled by Feth Ali Shah, of the tribe of the Cadjars, the origin of which is as follows:—

During the reign of Shah Abbas I. considerable assemblages of Turkish families, collecting on the northern frontier of Persia, placed themselves under the protection of that monarch, and entered into his armies. Abbas received them most cordially; but apprehensive lest they might in process of time become too powerful, he dispersed them throughout his empire. Part of them repaired to Mazanderan, where they had to make head against the Usbecks and Turcomans; while others defended the provinces of the Persian Gulf against the attacks of the Arabs. The Persians witnessed with mortification the reception given by the king to these new-comers, whom they contemptuously denominated *cadjars*, or runaways, an appellation which they still retain. In a short time, however, the horde of Mazanderan acquired great reputation for valour; it frequently signalized itself during the reigns of Hussain and Thamasps, and formed even part of the body-guard of the latter of those princes. The Cadjars were then commanded by Feth Ali Khan, great-grandfather of the present monarch. He obtained, in 1723, the government of Mazanderan, and was ordered to drive the Afghans from Teheran; but being defeated by them, he retired to Asterabad. After the expulsion of the Afghans by Nadir Shah, Mazanderan was in a state of rebellion. Ibrahim, Nadir's brother, reduced it, took Feth Ali Khan, and put him to death. He is considered as the first chieftain who rendered his tribe renowned, and bore the title of prince. Some time after this event, his son was taken into favour by Nadir, who appointed him governor of Asterabad, a city on the Caspian Sea. This was the celebrated Mohammed Hassan Khan, who was highly renowned at the time for his wars with Kerim Khan. In 1743 he commanded a corps of troops at the siege of Moossool. After the death of Adel, the successor of Nadir, and his brother Ibrahim, Mohammed marched from Asterabad against the governor of Mazanderan, whom he defeated and took prisoner; routed the Afghans, and

in a short time found his ranks swelled with innumerable Turcomans and Usbecks, whom success drew to his standard. In 1752, he was master not only of Mazanderan, but also of Tabaristan and Ghilan. The same year he defeated Kerim Khan, and established his authority over the provinces contiguous to the Caspian Sea. A second victory, in 1756, put him in possession of Ispahan, where he found young Ismail, of the family of the Sofis, who had been invested with the title of Shah, and declared himself his protector. From that period it was apparently not self-interest by which he was actuated: he was influenced by a nobler sentiment, which prompted him to restore the crown to the family of the Sofis. About this time, Asad, another rebel, who had made himself master of several towns of Irak, retired to Georgia, and his flight put Mohammed Khan in possession of Adherbijan and Irak Adjemi. The Cadjar prince even found himself strong enough to march against Shiraz, the seat of Kerim Khan's power. His army amounted to 80,000 men, though he had left 10,000 at Ispahan, and 10,000 more were distributed in the provinces. Never since Nadir's time had any chieftain been able to collect so formidable a force; but Mohammed Khan's successes had so inflated him with pride, as to render him intolerably arrogant. He was detested by the officers; and the people, bowed down by his tyrannical yoke, and daily subjected to fresh oppressions, loaded him with execrations. Kerim Khan availed himself of this disposition to bribe his troops to desert. In a short time Mohammed had about him but a handful of Cadjars, with whom he fled with the utmost precipitation to Asterabad. This happened in 1758. In consequence of this reverse, Mohammed lost Ispahan and all the towns of Irak and Adherbijan, so that his possessions were reduced to the single province of Mazanderan, which is naturally defended by lofty mountains and by defiles, where a small number of men may keep in check a whole army. Treachery smoothed these obstacles to Kerim's general. Sheik Ali, a brave man and able negotiator, contrived, by means of promises, money, and dignities, to bribe the officer to whom Mohammed had committed the defence of the passes. Mohammed, surprised in the very heart of his country, resisted in vain: all he could do, was to maintain the military reputation which he had acquired, by selling his life at a dear rate; he was nevertheless defeated and slain, and his head was carried to Kerim. His death checked for some time the prosperity of the Cadjars; for Sheik Ali not only possessed himself of the treasures of the vanquished chieftain, but carried away his six sons as hostages to Ispahan. A circumstance which would appear unaccountable to a person unacquainted with Persian politics, is, that sixteen years after this

event, Kerim conferred on Hussain Khan, one of these Cadjars, the government of Asterabad; nay more, that after he had rebelled, and been taken and put to death, his brother, Murtasa Kuli Khan, was appointed his successor. But it is no uncommon thing in Persia, to see a family, several members of which have manifested a rebellious spirit, nay, even a rebel himself, obtain his confirmation in some high dignity. The court keeps numerous and trusty agents about such a person, and all his motions are known to the government. Kerim's death set the other sons of Mohammed Khan at liberty, and they availed themselves of it to retire to Asterabad. Aga Mohammed, the most enterprising of them, expelled Murtasa from his government, and established himself in his stead. This act of violence sowed disharmony among the brothers, two of whom joined Ali Murad, a powerful rebel, while the two others espoused the cause of Aga Mohammed.

The latter became at length the undisputed sovereign of Persia, though he never assumed the title of *Shah*. He was assassinated by two of his officers in 1797. The instigator of this crime, Sadik Khan, the general of his armies, took advantage of it to seize the royal treasures, before the death of Mohammed was publicly known, and at the head of 10,000 men fled to Adherbijan. It was his intention to succeed his victim. Three other competitors meanwhile entered the lists: these were Baba Khan, governor of Shiraz, nephew of Aga Mohammed; Ali Kuli Khan, Mohammed's brother; and Mohammed Khan, son of Zeki Khan, successor to Kerim: and the first of these is the reigning monarch of Persia.

The tribe of the Cadjars is at present divided into two branches, the Yocaroo-Bash and the Ashgah-Bash, which have several subdivisions. It is computed that there are from fifteen to eighteen thousand Cadjars in Khorasan, at Meru; five thousand at Erivan, and one thousand at Guindjeh. Ever since the accession of Aga Mohammed to the throne, the principal offices in the state have been filled by Cadjars, which renders them obnoxious to the public hatred and the jealousy of their rivals.

SECTION II.

FETH ALI SHAH.

Feth Ali Shah, the present king of Persia, was the son of the same Hussain, on whom Kerim conferred the government of Asterabad, after the downfall of Mohammed Khan, and who perished in consequence of his rebellion, if that term may be applied to the attempts of a number of ambitious men to seat themselves on a throne to which there was no rightful owner.

Feth Ali, who, prior to his elevation, was called Baba Khan, held a command in the army of his uncle Aga Mohammed, who also invested him with the dignity of governor of Shiraz, which he held at the time of Mohammed's death. Such a concurrence of circumstances as rarely happens in a country where the sword gives the only right to the sovereignty, seated him on the throne. When he heard of the assassination of Aga Mohammed, he hastened from Shiraz to Teheran, and was so fortunate as to gain possession of that important place, where the treasures of the empire and the families of all the principal officers fell into his power. He thus ensured the attachment of the soldiery and the fidelity of the most important personages in the state. Hadjee Ibrahim, the most distinguished man in Teheran, declared in his favour; and it was in a great measure owing to his powerful and extensive influence, that the prince met with so little resistance to the accomplishment of his wishes. The murder of this same Hadjee Ibrahim, to whom Feth Ali Shah was so largely indebted for his elevation, who looked upon him as his own son, and was attached to him with the affection of a father, is an indelible stain upon his character. It is true that he used rather too freely those rights which his services gave him; that he spared neither advice nor rebuke; but if it be frequently a crime to tell truth to princes, ought they to punish it by a crime still more heinous? Feth Ali nevertheless has not the reputation of being a tyrant.

The fate of Hadjee Ibrahim verifies the common remark—Confer a favour on a tyrant, and your reward will be death. It is related on undoubted authority, that the minister was aware of the designs against him, but declared he would not imbrue his hands again in blood: he could easily have destroyed the king, but relied on his gratitude, and conceived that the reward for giving away a crown would at least be mercy. He experienced the contrary, and his women even participated in the fate of their master. But the systematic treachery of the minister did not deserve a better fate. Hadjee Ibrahim experienced the same ingratitude he had shown to Lootf Ali Khan. He had been raised to his situation by the family of the Zunds, and he destroyed it; he was the principal instrument of the elevation of the Cadjars, and they destroyed him.

It is a generally received axiom among the Persians, that he alone is worthy of reigning who has felt the edge of the sword, or at least exposed himself to it. Valour in the estimation of these people is the first of qualities. This must be the case in a country where war is in some measure permanent, and where it is thought as glorious to cut off the head of an enemy with a single stroke of the sabre, as with us to perform the most virtu-

ous action. Since Feth Ali Shah has filled the throne, he has had no opportunity for the display of military qualities: the Persians would probably hold him in higher estimation, had he spilled more blood. His expeditions have been confined to a few excursions into Khorasan, rather with a view to keep up the good opinion of his subjects respecting his bravery, and to inure his troops to the fatigues of war, than to subdue that province.

Sir Robert Ker Porter, to whom his majesty sat for his portrait, who seems to have been not a little flattered by his condescension, and to be not very sparing of flattery in return, describes, in the following terms, the personal character of this monarch:—

His face seemed exceedingly pale, of a polished marble hue, with the finest contour of features, and eyes dark, brilliant and piercing, a beard black as jet, and of a length which fell below his chest over a large portion of the effulgent belt which held his diamond-hilted dagger. This extraordinary amplitude of beard appears to have been a badge of Persian royalty from the earliest times; for we find it attached to the heads of the sovereigns, in all the ancient sculptured remains throughout the empire.

His complexion, as before observed, is extremely pale; but when he speaks on subjects that interest him, a vivid colour rushes to his cheek, but only for a moment, it passes so transiently away. His nose is very aquiline; his eye-brows full, black and finely arched, with lashes of the same appearance, shading eyes of the most perfect form, dark and beaming, but at times full of a fire that kindles his whole countenance, though in general its expression is that of languor. The almost sublime dignity which the form of his beard adds to the native majesty of his features, is not to be conceived; and the smile which often shone through it, ineffably sweet and noble, rather increased than diminished the effect.

Though the reigning monarch has never been celebrated for that activity which demonstrates itself in ambitious projects or attachment to the pleasures of the chase, yet he manifests on every occasion that promptitude in the despatch of public business, and vigilance in maintaining the laws he has enacted for the security of the persons and property of his people, which bear every testimony to the soundness of his judgment on the duties of a king: while his encouragement of Persian literature, and his taste for poetry and the arts, show him to be a scholar and a man of genius. That his views are liberally directed toward the improvement of his people, is still more evident from the many Persians sent by him to Europe, to study the arts and sciences most wanted in their own country. These men gen-

erally conduct themselves well when abroad ; and the quickness of their intellect soon making them masters of their objects, they return home in the prime of life, bringing back not merely the learning and practice for which they were sent out, but seeds of moral, mental, and national improvements ; which being gradually sown in the minds of the people, nothing can prevent from producing their natural harvest.

The long tranquillity which has reigned in the interior of the empire, ever since the death of the last sovereign, Aga Mohammed Khan ; the comparatively flourishing state of the country, with the increase of its population and revenue, speak strongly in favour of the reigning monarch, who is so far from having imbibed the tyrannous style of rule common with many of his predecessors, that the arm of blood is never raised by his order, but over the head of the robber and murderer.

Perhaps, however, his passion for riches is not less strong, though not indulged by violence, than that which impelled those short-sighted tyrants to sacrifice the life of a subject in order to secure his treasures. The whole of the higher orders pursue the same object, with an avidity by which the lower classes are great sufferers ; a general system of exaction in those above them depressing their industry by extorting its fruits.

Feth Ali Shah is not merely a lover of poetry, but himself a poet, and the author of some pleasing compositions of that kind. The chief of the poets of his court is in high favour with him, and receives for his praises and the effusions of his genius more substantial remuneration. The king is said to pay him a *toomaun* (about eighteen shillings sterling) for every couplet ; and it is even asserted that he has once released him from the payment of a considerable sum due from him to the royal exchequer, as a reward for a poem which he had composed.

The governor of Kashan was indebted for his appointment to his being an excellent poet. On his sending the king a present of one of his compositions, he expressed greater satisfaction at the gift than at the sumptuous offering of Chiragh Ali Khan, which amounted to some thousands of pounds ; but, adds Mr. Scott Waring, he would be very sorry to have all his governors poets, and all their presentations poems.

The species of poetry for which his majesty shows the strong-predilection, is the light, amorous and playful. His compositions are chiefly *ghazels*, that is, odes or songs, the chief merit of which consists in expressions, metaphors, and allusions, which lose nearly all their beauty, spirit, and elegance, in translation. Of these pieces, the traveller just quoted gives the two following specimens :—

“ If thou wert to display thy beauties, my beloved, to Wamiq,

he would sacrifice the life of Oozra at the shrine of thy perfections. If Yoosof beheld thy charms, he would think no more of Zuleekha. Come to me, and comply with my wishes; give me no farther promises of to-morrow. When the mistress of Khaqan* approached him with a hundred graces, one glance captivated his heart."

The second is as follows:—"When I yielded my heart, she began her cruelty, yet she terms this tyranny faithfulness. Call not thine eyes by their name, for truly they are the source of affliction; the loftiness of thy stature betrays thy pride. I shall never complain of thee, my love; for however great thy cruelty, it must be proper. Destroy me at once, for the height of my ambition is to die by the hand of my mistress. Khaqan has watched near thy dwelling until he has fallen into old age, and still thou maliciously callest him faithless."

In the library of the king of France, there is a collection of the poems of the Persian monarch. It is a handsome thick octavo volume, most beautifully written, which M. Joannin, interpreter to the French embassy to Persia, received from Feth Ali Shah himself, and presented to the noble establishment, to which it now belongs.

SECTION III.

OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.

Under this head, we comprehend the king's sons only. We know not the precise number of the royal offspring at present; but in 1814, Feth Ali Shah had sixty-five sons, and about the like number of daughters. It has sometimes happened, that several women have made him a father in one and the same night. One day, while Mr. Morier was at Teheran, in his first visit to Persia, six of his women produced his majesty six children, four boys and two girls: hence the only wonder is, that his family is not still more numerous.

It has been customary with some of the Persian monarchs, to deprive their children of sight, lest they should prove rebellious subjects, leaving but one unmutilated, as heir to the throne: while others have been content with dooming them to perpetual imprisonment in the seraglio. Feth Ali has not imitated the barbarity of the former practice, or the injustice of the latter: several of his sons who have arrived at manhood occupy high posts in the empire, and are training in the art of government under experienced ministers, to whose guidance the king consigns them.

* A title equivalent to Great Emperor.

The king's eldest son, Mohammed Ali Mirza, is invested with the government of Kermanshah. The condition of his mother, who is a Georgian slave, or perhaps the partiality of his father for another son, has excluded him from the throne. He is thirty-five years of age, with a pleasing physiognomy, affable manners, courage, and activity. These qualities will doubtless prove more detrimental than profitable to the state, on the death of Feth Ali; for Mohammed has frequently declared to the king, that the sword should either secure or deprive him of the throne, and that it was his determination to overcome the obstacles placed in his way. Aga Mohammed Khan, who used to treat him with much kindness, once asked him, what he would do were he king. The child, then not more than five or six years old, instantly replied, that his first act would be to destroy him. This answer so enraged his grand-uncle, that he ordered him to be strangled; but he afterwards pardoned him, at the intercession of the present king's mother.

Abbas Mirza, whose mother was of the tribe of the Cadjars, and whom Feth Ali has declared his successor, governs the province of Abherbijan. According to the concurrent testimony of all travellers, the qualities displayed by this prince justify the preference of his father. He is of middling size, his face, though pale, is full of majesty and good-nature, and animated by large black eyes, shaded by well arched eye-brows which meet. He is an excellent horseman, distinguished for his skill in all military exercises, and passionately fond of war. The simplicity of his dress bespeaks the dignity of his mind. When one of his officers once appeared at his court clothed in stuff of gold, and covered with rich ornaments—"What is the benefit of this luxury?" said the prince—"instead of this gold and this tinsel, why do you not buy a good horse, a good sword, and a good gun? Such finery as this belongs to women, and is unbecoming a man, and especially a soldier."

The same spirit which dictated this rebuke, is manifested in an anecdote recorded of this prince by Captain Kotzebue, who accompanied the Russian embassy to Persia, in 1817. When the ambassador offered him the presents sent for him by the emperor, among which were a service of porcelain, diamond plumes, &c. Abbas Mirza selected only a superb gun and a sabre: "This," said he, "belongs to me; the rest is too handsome for me, and belongs to the king."

His visir one day entered his palace with a woful and dejected look. The prince inquired the cause of his affliction. The minister hesitated to reply. "Speak," said Abbas—"has some public disaster befallen us?—have the Russians gained a victory?—have they taken from us some province?"—"None of these,"

answered the minister; "but your highness's children are dangerously ill. Their lives are in imminent danger."—"Perhaps they are already dead!" rejoined the prince. The visir then confessed that three of his sons had just expired. "Dead!" exclaimed Abbas—"but why should I grieve?—the state loses nothing by it. If I were deprived of three good servants, if death were to snatch from me three useful officers, then indeed, I should have cause for grief. My children, on the other hand, were very young; and God knows whether they would have been useful to their country."

Kotzebue, speaking of the reception of the Russian embassy by this prince at Tabreez, says:—We accidentally discovered an honourable trait in his character, which, in Persia, excited our astonishment. The ambassador observed in the garden a projecting corner of an old wall, which spoiled the beauty of the surrounding objects and disfigured the prospect. His excellency asked the prince why he did not order it to be pulled down. "Only conceive," replied his highness—"with a view to the forming of gardens on a grand scale, I purchased the ground of several proprietors. The owner of that where the wall stands is an old peasant, who has absolutely refused to sell his property to me, because he will not part for any price, with an ancient patrimonial possession of his family. His obstinacy, I must confess, vexes me exceedingly, and yet I cannot but honour him for his attachment to his forefathers, and still more for his boldness in denying me the ground. I must wait till the time when his heir will perhaps be more reasonable."

This prince has exhibited a phenomenon that is truly extraordinary in an Asiatic state, in the relinquishment of those inveterate prejudices which reject all innovations, how palpable soever the advantages with which they are attended. To Abbas Mirza alone is due the introduction of the regular discipline of Europe into the Persian army, and the formation of its artillery within the few last years; and it is allowed by all who have visited the country, that for so short a period he has, with the assistance, indeed, of able English officers, accomplished a great deal.

The character of this prince is thus drawn by Mr. Morier, who enjoyed ample opportunities for observation:—"Abbas Mirza is reported by all travellers to be as superior to the rest of his countrymen in mind, as he certainly is in external qualities. His countenance is always animated, his smile agreeable, and his conversation full of *naïveté* and pleasantry. In his dress he is scarcely to be distinguished from other persons, for he generally wears the *kadeh*, the common manufactured cotton stuff of Persia, made up into a single-breasted *caba*, with a Cashmere shawl round his waist. The greatest piece of finery belonging

to him, is a diamond-hilted dagger, which was formerly the property of Lootf Ali Khan, and which, on an emergency, he once threatened to sell, that he might be able to pay up some arrears due to his troops. He wears English boots, and expressed great admiration of the helmets of our light dragoons, which he said he would not scruple to wear.

“To Europeans he is studiously polite: when they visit him, he enters into that kind of conversation which shows a mind eager for information. His rapid manner of speaking, which at first appears affected, is quite natural to him, and gives an appearance of sincerity to what he says, because it does not look premeditated. He is fond of reading, and his studies are chiefly restricted to the historians of his country, of which the *Shah Nameh* of Ferdousee is his favourite. He is anxious to acquire correct notions respecting the different states of Europe, and has got together a large collection of English books, which he frequently looks at without understanding them, and is always devising plans for getting them translated, but hitherto without success. A copy of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was given to him; and it is related that, wishing to find out a piece of mechanism, which he was desirous to have made, he had the patience to turn over all the volumes of that work, until he came to what he wanted. He has also procured a collection of maps from the printing-press at Constantinople, which he has studied; so that he may be considered as perhaps the best geographer in his country. In short, from all that we can learn respecting the character of this prince, we are warranted in concluding, that if he had received an enlightened education, and been brought up with examples of virtue and honour constantly before him, he would not only have been an ornament to his country, but would have classed with the best of men and the best of princes.”

Steadily pursuing the plans which he has formed for the improvement of his country, Abbas Mirza is solicitous to make the Persians more and more familiar with the arts and sciences of Europe, and has recently sent two young men to England, one of whom is engaged in the study of surgery, and the other of military engineering. In these plans the prince is faithfully seconded by his visir Mirza Bezoork, who is considered as the ablest statesman in Persia, and whose son is married to one of the king's daughters.

Hussain Ali Mirza, governor of Shiraz, is next to Abbas the greatest favourite with his father. His person and manners are dignified, but his disposition is very different from that of his brother Abbas. Pleasure is the sole occupation of Ali Mirza, who divides his time between the chase and his harem. The

revenues of his province are squandered in silly expenses, in magnificent hunting equipages, splendid dresses, and the purchase of beautiful women. This prodigality pleases the Persians, and those people, who love to find defects in their superiors and to reveal them, speak of this prince with commendation only. He has none of those sanguinary inclinations inherent in despotism: he has never caused ears or noses to be cut off or eyes to be put out: the bastinado is the only punishment inflicted by his command.

There are other princes besides these three, who are invested with high dignities in the empire. Hassan Ali Mirza is governor of Teheran; and Mohammed Takee Mirza has for his appanage the town of Beroodyerd, situated near Nehavend, and containing 12,000 inhabitants. Each of these princes has a visir, who is devoted to the interest of the king, who closely watches the conduct of his master, reports it to the court, and thus thwarts any plans of rebellion which he might entertain.

SECTION IV.

OF THE KING'S TITLES.

It is a very ancient custom with the monarchs of the East, to assume such titles as are most flattering to pride; and it must be confessed that very often their power has resided in these titles only. The reader will doubtless recollect the pompous epithets which the Parthian sovereigns appended to their names: the title of *king of kings* did not always satisfy their vanity, and some of them assumed the appellation of *god*. Their successors, the Sassanides, imitated this practice. An epistle, addressed by a prince of this dynasty to Behram Tshoubin, opens as follows:—"Cosroes, king of kings, master of potentates, lord of nations, prince of peace, with relation to the gods a most excellent and eternal man, but with regard to men a most illustrious god, glorious conqueror, brilliant as the sun, who enlightens the darkness of night, noble by his ancestors," &c. In another epistle, preserved by Ammianus Marcellinus, Sapor entitles himself: "King of kings, companion of the stars, brother of the sun and moon."

In the treaty concluded with the emperor Justin, and inserted in the *Embassies* of Menander, the great Anushirvan is styled:—"The divine, the good, the pacific, the sovereign Cosroes, king of kings, the happy, the pious, the beneficent, to whom the gods have given a great kingdom and unbounded power; the giant of giants, made in the image of the gods."

As these pompous epithets are but the figurative expression of pride, and pride is inherent in the heart of man, it may nat

rally be supposed that this sentiment has lost none of its force, in the twelve or fifteen centuries which have since elapsed. Feth Ali Shah, if he does not arrogate to himself precisely the title of king of kings, employs other equivalent expressions. Thus, a letter written in the name of this prince contains the following passage:—"Since the seal, like unto fate, affixed to the decree of our sovereign power, is become the ornament of the commands received with submission over the surface of the earth," &c. In another place, he says:—"The impressions of my bounty, powerful as those of the luminary of day; the marks of my favour, like the rays of the rising sun." The ordinary title of the Persian monarchs, however, is *Shah*, which corresponds with our emperor; or *Padishah Iran*, great emperor of Iran, Kaqan, &c. His subjects indeed dare not give him so simple a denomination: they must not write his name without adding:—"The most exalted of men; the source of majesty, of grandeur, of power, of glory; the equal of the sun; the chief of the great kings, whose throne is the stirrup of heaven; the centre of the globe of the earth; the master of the conjunctions; the asylum of the world; the shadow of God, diffused over the face of all sensible things," &c. It should be observed, indeed, that these denominations vary according to the eloquence of the writer, and that very frequently they are employed merely to round a period, and to give a proper measure and cadence to the language.

SECTION V.

OF THE KING'S HOUSEHOLD.

The king's household consists, like that of European monarchs, of a great number of officers, each having his particular duties and functions. The chief of these is the high chamberlain, who is superintendant of the king's finances, manager of the royal domains and inspector of all the other officers. On him, all persons engaged in the arts and sciences at the expense of the royal exchequer are dependent; and to him such foreigners as come to Persia on commercial business have to address themselves. It is his duty also to make suitable provision for ambassadors, to assign them quarters, and to supply all their wants. Hence some idea may be formed of the influence attached to this dignity. The second officer is the Ichic-Agasee, whom Morier calls the master of the ceremonies: he superintends the porters, ushers, door-keepers, and other officers of that class belonging to the palace. Before him is borne a gold stick covered with precious stones, which is the mark of his dignity: and when the king quits his seraglio, he takes it in his hand, standing at



MASTER of the CEREMONIES.



some distance from his majesty's person, and endeavouring to anticipate his commands from his looks. As soon as the king looks at him, he advances, takes his orders, lays down his stick, causes the orders to be executed, resumes his stick and returns to his place. He receives all petitions presented to the king, delivers them into his hand, and either reads or reports the substance of them to his majesty. His office by right requires him to lie every night at the door of the palace, but instead of performing this service in person, he places guards there.

The *Yesaools* and the *Yesaools sohbet* are immediately dependent on the *Ichic-Agasee-Bashee*. The former are a kind of messengers, who carry the orders of the king; the latter are a sort of assistants to the master of the ceremonies: they form a body, composed of the sons of nobles. When on duty, they carry painted and gilt sticks, impose silence, and keep order wherever the king may be. When the king gives audience to ambassadors, they go to the entrance of the palace to meet them, introduce them, and lay their presents before his majesty.

The *Meer-akhor*, or chief equerry, and the *Chikkiar-Bashee*, or chief huntsman, come next to the *Ichic-Agasee-Bashee*. They have each subordinate officers, as the *Djeladar-Bashee*, chief of the grooms; the *Zindartshee-Bashee*, chief of the saddlers; the *Oozengoo-coortshidjy-Bashee* or chief of the stirrup-holders; the *Taoos-Kaneh-Agasee*, head-keeper of the birds of prey; the *Sekban-Bashee*, keeper of the hounds. Here too we must place the *Hakim-Bashee*, or chief physician, and the *Monaddjem-Bashee*, or chief astrologer. The reader need not be surprised to meet with such an office as the latter, in a country where the sway of astrology is omnipotent among all classes. Such are the places which confer the right of sitting in the presence of the king. The chief of those to which this privilege is not attached, is the post of *Mesheldar-Bashee*, or chief torch-bearer, who rides before the king, carrying a golden torch in his hand, and superintends the flambeaux for lighting the interior of the palace. These torches are brass cups fixed to the end of rods of the same metal, which are filled with oil, and in the middle of which is burned a cotton wick. The Persians seldom make use of wax, and never of tallow or rosin. In Chardin's time, the *Mesheldar-Bashee* had the superintendence of taverns, public prostitutes, musicians, and buffoons of all kinds. The *Mehmandar-Bashee* comes next to the *Mesheldar-Bashee*: he is the chief of the officers, whose duty it is to go out of the city to meet ambassadors, to conduct them to the quarters prepared for them, and to accompany them in their journey: for every foreigner of distinction, on entering the Persian territory, is furnished with an officer whose duty it is to attend him, to protect

him from insult, and to procure for him whatever he wants. The *Mekmandar-Bashee* does not fail to pay frequent visits to ambassadors, to inquire how their *Mekmandars* conduct themselves.

The post of *Mihtur*, or chamberlain, is always filled by a white eunuch: it is considered as one of the most important in the royal household. In Persia, as in Turkey, there are two sorts of eunuchs, black and white. The latter are very rarely, if ever, admitted among the women, whereas the former never quit the palace. The chamberlain has not a right to enter the women's apartments, unless he be sent for; but he seldom leaves the king. He waits upon him at table on his knees, and tastes the dishes; he dresses and undresses him; and is entrusted with the care of the jewels and precious stones commonly worn by the sovereign. In Europe, gold keys or wands form the characteristic insignia of the office of chamberlain: in Persia, the *Mihtur* wears suspended from his waist a small gold box, in the shape of a gondola, enriched with precious stones, and containing two or three exquisitely fine white handkerchiefs, opium, perfumes, and cordials.

Several other places of inferior note we shall pass over in silence.

SECTION IV.

OF THE KING'S SERAGLIO.

We apply, in our language, the term *seraglio* to that part of the oriental palaces which is inhabited by the women, and to which the prince alone has access. The idea attached to this term does not precisely agree with its meaning: *serail*, or *serai*, signifies merely a house. Thus, the public buildings at which caravans stop, are called *caravanserais*. The spot which we call seraglio, the orientals denominate *harem*, that is, the sacred place—the place to which access is forbidden.

The harem is in general the most magnificent portion of the palaces of Persia and the East, for here the princes spend the greatest part of their time. All that here passes is enveloped in profound mystery: the harem is the theatre of pleasure, intrigues, and crimes; and there, too, the most important matters are irrevocably decided upon. Chardin, that minute and faithful observer, notwithstanding his familiarity with the great, could not gain much information concerning the harem. The same offices and places exist there as at court; but they are filled by women. The king has his chief and under-equerry who carry his arms, the captain of the gate, the captain of the guards, ushers, and *gentlemen*, all of whom are females: while others



WOMAN OF THE HAREM.



read public prayers, and perform the rites of religion. These follow professions useful in common life; those practise medicine; and others inter the dead: for a harem contains a mosque, a cemetery, in short, all that is to be found in a city—in fact, it is a colony of Amazons.

In the harem, there are three classes of females distinguished by different appellations. The princesses of the blood are called *Begum*, and such of the king's women as have brought him children, are called *Kanoom*. Under the denomination of *Katoon*, are comprehended the women of inferior rank: and all those not belonging to any of these three classes, are termed slaves.

Each female of the harem, one of whom is represented in the engraving at the beginning of this section, has an apartment to herself, or lodges with some aged woman, and cannot visit her fellow-prisoners without permission. Besides subsistence, she receives an allowance, half of which is paid in money, and the rest in stuff for wearing apparel. The number of her attendants increases with her rank. One of the black female slaves, kept for the purpose of waiting on the women belonging to the harem, is shown in the opposite plate.

When the king dies, the harem is filled with mourning, consternation, and dismay: but the tears that are shed, are not those of regret for the lost object. What these women deplore is the loss of the shadow of liberty, and of the illusory pleasures which charmed their captivity: they will be shut up for the remainder of their lives in the most retired part of the harem, and a guard of ferocious eunuchs will prohibit the entrance of all who are not brought thither by the natural wants of the victims.

The harem is divided into several quarters; each of which has its governor, and these governors are all under a *Darogha*, or general superintendent. The *Darogha* is like the Argus chosen by Juno to watch young Io: he has a hundred eyes, fifty of which sleep while the others wake. Age and ugliness are indispensable requisites for this office, to which immense responsibility is attached.

According to the report of the Persians, the king's harem contains the most beautiful women in the East. In any other country, the manner of supplying it would be the most execrable tyranny: in Persia, it is an honour courted by the most distinguished persons. No sooner does a beauty spring up in any part of the kingdom, and the rumour of her charms reach the court, than she is taken from her family, or, more properly speaking, her parents are anxious to offer her for his majesty's acceptance, and she is transferred from the paternal habitation to the royal harem. The favour and fortune of the parents

keep pace with the king's fondness for his new mistress ; and when she becomes a mother, the most elevated dignities are conferred on her father.

The name of mother, however, though it confirms the influence of her who presents the monarch with the first son, becomes to the others a source of apprehension and sorrow. Confined with their infants in a corner of the seraglio, they live in continual fear lest a supreme order should deprive them of life, or at least of sight. Hence the crimes of which the seraglio is the theatre—crimes, which the hand could sooner commit than the imagination conceive. When the number of children is too great, the queen-mother, who rules with despotic sway in the harem, coolly orders a certain proportion of them to be despatched, and custom stifles all remorse in her soul.

The only chance which such a female has of improving her condition, is that of being transferred from the royal harem to the arms of some grandee: for the king, by way of expressing his satisfaction with his favourites, makes them a present of one of his women; nay, it is often the case that a noble solicits this favour of the queen-mother. Fortunate is the lot of the lady thus given away: she receives the title of a lawful wife, exercises the rights which it confers, and is treated in every respect as a princess. Sometimes, however, it happens that a woman who has incurred the displeasure of the king or of the queen-mother, also quits the harem to be married: but in that case, she is given to some menial of the palace, and a more ignominious punishment than this cannot be inflicted.

There are three sorts of guards to the harem. The white eunuchs guard the outside, without ever entering the interior. The black eunuchs, mostly brought from the coast of Malabar, dwell round the second inner inclosure; within which women are on duty night and day, relieving each other by turns.

The Persians give the eunuchs the name of Kodja, which is equivalent to an old fellow. Their power is great, for they enjoy the full confidence of their master, transact his business, and manage his revenues. In the houses of the great, they superintend the education of children, who are instructed by them in the rudiments of science and the principles of religion. Till the moment when the princes of the blood quit the harem, either to fill some elevated post in the empire, or to ascend the throne, they are under the care of eunuchs, who act in the double capacity of preceptors and governors.





ATTENDANTS on the QUEEN of PERSIA.

SECTION VII.

OF THE COOROOK.

We have just seen what precautions are taken to ensure the fidelity of the women of the harem, and to prevent the access of strangers. From these precautions, we may infer the strictness of those which are practised when they appear abroad.

When the king's women are about to remove from one place to another, public notice is given five or six hours beforehand of the road which they are to pursue. Wo then betide the unfortunate wretch who should happen to be found in that road, or in any place from which he could perceive the camels or horses which carry these ladies. The very inhabitants of the villages through which this road passes, must quit their habitations. When the hour for their departure is arrived, troops of horsemen ride forward at a great distance before the cavalcade, crying: *Coorook! coorook!* prohibition!—which is a notice for every one to retire. Between these horsemen and the females come eunuchs also on horseback, who with thick sticks belabour such as have not retired with sufficient despatch.

The ladies commonly travel on horseback, riding astride, after the fashion of the East, like men—"the most natural and safest seat for a lady," gravely observes a recent traveller. Some of them, the favourite, for example, are carried in a species of litter called by the Persians *takhtirevan*. It consists of a cage of lattice-work covered with cloth, borne by two mules, the one before and the other behind, and conducted by two men, one of whom rides on a third mule in front, and the other generally walks by the side.

Mr. Morier gives an instance of the severity with which the *mehmandar* to the British embassy punished one of his servants, for persisting to approach too near the *takhtirevan* in which Lady Ouseley was carried. He immediately called the man before him, and struck him with his sword, and afterwards with his whip. He then ordered his attendants to attack him. They threw him on the ground, beat him with their fists, then with their sticks, then jumped on him and so mauled him that he could scarcely be lifted on his horse. This was done without a single question being put to the poor creature himself; it was done in the middle of the road, in the dark, and with an immense cavalcade passing by at the time.

The *coorook* would be a very serious inconvenience, if the king were frequently to take a fancy to make his women accompany him; for no weather, neither hail, rain, snow nor mud,

can in the least affect the prohibition to remain in the streets through which these ladies are to pass; every male who has attained the age of seven years must retire. This *coorook* obliged Chardin to lie from home twice during his residence in Persia.

SECTION VIII.

SPLENDOUR OF THE COURT—ROYAL AUDIENCES.

The court of Teheran exhibits a luxury and a magnificence, that bespeak a great monarch. When Feth Ali Shah appears in all his royal ornaments, it is impossible to look at his person if the sun shines upon him. The throne, known by the appellation of *Takti-thaous*, the peacock throne, is particularly superb; it is said to have cost one hundred thousand toomauns, or upwards of £90,000 sterling.

When Nadir Shah, in his invasion of India, had made himself master of Delhi, he secured for his share of the booty all the precious stones collected during the space of more than three centuries by the Great Moguls, and carried off great part of them into Persia. He applied them to the construction of a large tent of the most extraordinary magnificence, and of a throne and canopy, supported by four pillars and surmounted by four peacocks, whence it is called the peacock throne. It was of massive gold, and entirely covered with precious stones. At Nadir's death, these riches were partly dispersed, and the rest preserved in the royal treasury. The latter Feth Ali Shah now possesses; and since his accession, he has recovered many articles which had been carried off during preceding revolutions.

When the king of Persia gives a solemn audience, all his guards, ranged in long files, are under arms: they occupy all the courts preceding the hall in which the throne stands. The finest horses, covered with harness and housings, enriched with precious stones, are fastened by thick cords of silk and gold to rings likewise of gold fixed in the ground: near them are implements for the stable of the same metal. Lions and bears, tied to posts, also figure in these parades. The court, which immediately conducts to the hall of audience, is filled with the chief dignitaries of the empire most magnificently dressed.

The *divan-kaneh*, or hall of audience, has usually several floors, and is quite open in front. At Teheran, the *kalvet-kaneh*, withdrawing-room, is entirely painted and gilt: several pictures form its chief ornaments. One, placed on the left of the window, represents a battle between the Persians and the Russians, in which, as may naturally be supposed, the former have the advantage. The king is there seen on horseback. Another, opposite to the preceding, represents Feth Ali hunting, at the

moment when he has just pierced a stag with a javelin. Several other pictures exhibit females dancing.

At the extremity of this hall is placed the peacock throne. It seems to have been made in imitation of Nadir's. This throne, as Morier informs us, is raised three feet above the floor, and seems to be an oblong square, twelve feet in length and eight in breadth: a high balustrade runs round it, and its extremities are adorned with vases and other ornaments. The back of the *takti-thaous* is very high: on each side there is a pillar supporting a bird, probably a peacock, glistening with precious stones and holding a ruby in his bill. The canopy of this throne consists of an oval ornament, from which diamonds throw a thousand brilliant rays. On this throne the king is seated, upon a cushion embroidered with fine pearls. His appearance at the *Nowroose*, or festival of the new year, when he receives the homage of all his subjects, is thus described by Sir Robert Porter:—

“He was one blaze of jewels, which literally dazzled the sight on first looking at him. A lofty tiara of three elevations was on his head, which shape appears to have been long peculiar to the crown of the great king. It was entirely composed of thickly-set diamonds, pearls, rubies, and emeralds, so exquisitely disposed as to form a mixture of the most beautiful colours, in the brilliant light reflected from its surface. Several black feathers, like the heron plume, were intermixed with the resplendent aigrettes of this truly imperial diadem, whose bending points were finished with pear-formed pearls of an immense size. His vesture was of gold tissue, nearly covered with a similar disposition of jewellery; and crossing the shoulders were two strings of pearls, probably the largest in the world. I call his dress a vesture, because it sat close to his person from the neck to the bottom of the waist, showing a shape as noble as his air. At that point it devolved downward in loose drapery like the usual Persian garment, and was of the same costly materials with the vest. But for splendour, nothing could exceed the broad bracelets round his arms and the belt which encircled his waist; they actually blazed like fire, when the rays of the sun met them; and when we know the names derived from such excessive lustre, we cannot be surprised at seeing such an effect. The jewelled band on the right arm was called the *Mountain of Light*, and that on the left, the *Sea of Light*; which superb diamonds the rapacious conquests of Nadir Shah placed in the Persian regalia.

“The throne from which Feth Ali Shah viewed his assembled subjects was a platform of pure white marble, raised a few steps from the ground, and carpetted with shawls and cloth of gold,

on which the king sat in the fashion of his country, while his back was supported by a large cushion, encased in a net-work of pearls.

“On the right of the king, on occasions of extraordinary state, stand several of his sons magnificently dressed, in respectful attitudes. At some distance in front are ranged the great officers of the crown, according to their dignities. Five young pages, habited in velvet and silk, bear different articles. One holds a crown similar to that worn by the king; the second, a superb sword; the third, a buckler and a mace of gold and pearls; the fourth, a bow and arrow enriched with precious stones; and the fifth, a spitting-pot, adorned in the same manner.

“Nothing can equal this magnificence, but the humble looks of the assembly. The presence of the king fills all with fear and respect; and Jupiter making heaven tremble at his nod is not more awful than a Persian monarch amidst his court. Whoever approaches the throne, must previously put off his shoes, and make frequent obeisances. None is allowed to sit excepting poets, persons of extraordinary sanctity, and ambassadors: the king’s ministers never enjoy this privilege. The monarch, in fact, seems a being secluded from society, whom all are fearful of approaching: whether he speaks or is addressed, every thing demonstrates the influence of despotism or the meanness of servitude.”

SECTION IX.

OF THE KING’S GUARDS.

In the first rank of the troops composing the military household of the king must be placed the *Gholamee-shah* or *Gholam-shahee*, the king’s slaves,—a very numerous corps formed of the sons of nobles and of young Georgians. The name of *Gholam*, slave, denotes not so much a state of servitude, as a blind devotedness to the service of the prince. According to Mr. Scott Waring, the *Gholam-shahees*, who are considered as the choicest troops in Persia, amount to about 20,000. They have charge of the king’s person, receive greater pay and are clothed in a more expensive manner than the regular cavalry. The flower of this corps is formed into a body of about four thousand, who are distinguished by the excessive richness of their dress and the insolence of their behaviour. Messrs. Morier and Kinnier, however, state the number of *Gholams* as being much lower: according to them it does not exceed three thousand.

Besides these troops, who may be called the life-guards, there are four regiments of *kechikdjee*, each composed of three thousand men, and commanded by a *ser-kechikdjee*. These are





OFFICER OF THE GUARDS.

selected from among all the tribes, but more particularly from that of the Cadjars. Half of these troops are disciplined in the European manner, and half in the Persian. The former, who belong to the king's household, are called *Djan-baz*, in contradistinction to those trained by the princes, and especially by Abbas Mirza, who are denominated *Ser-baz*. The first of these appellations signifies "one who plays with his soul," and the latter "one who plays with his head." Both are expressive of devotedness and valour. The costume of a superior officer of the *Ser-baz* is shown in the annexed plate.

The *kechikdjees* reside and have their families at Teheran, or in the adjacent villages: they are obliged to assemble at the first signal. Their duty consists in marching about in the ark, or citadel, in which the palace is situated, and in going from tower to tower. When they relieve guard, a Mirza, or prince belonging to the corps, reviews it and calls over the names. If any officer or soldier is absent, he is severely punished. The rank of *Serkechidjee* is in great request, and the princes of the blood themselves deem it an honour to be appointed to it.

The *Gholam-shahees* form the cavalry of the royal guard, and the *kechikdjees* the infantry. These troops are clothed, equipped, and maintained, at the expense of the king.

SECTION X.

OF THE KING'S POWER.

It has already been stated, that the government of Persia is monarchical: perhaps it might be more properly called tyrannical—for what other term ought to be applied to the administration of a prince, whose power is not balanced by any class in the state, who has a right according to his caprice to deprive of property, nay, even of life itself, every subject who is so unfortunate as to incur his displeasure; in short, who can gratify his every whim, without being accountable to men for any of his actions? The opinion of the Persians respecting royalty is favourable to this unlimited power. Persuaded that the crown is conferred by the Almighty, and that the possessor, though neither Iman nor descendant of Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet, is nevertheless the vicegerent of this legislator, the successor of the apostle of God, they set no other bounds to their submission than those of their fanaticism. Not but that they charge the sovereign with violence and injustice: for it is a common expression in their language, when a person has sustained an injury and complains to the judge, to say: "He has played the king with me?"—"Art thou then king?" cries the Persian to the rapacious governor who robs him of his property, and harasses him

with his extortions. They murmur against the man, but they submit to the divine will of which the monarch is the organ. Let him give what order he will, in a paroxysm of anger, of intoxication, or of any passion whatever, it is instantaneously executed. Neither long services rendered to the state, nor tried integrity, nor distinguished merit, can screen a man from his capricious cruelty. If but a look, a word, manifests his sovereign will, the head of the ablest minister, or of the most successful general, falls beneath the sabre of a *Gholam*. This tyranny finds no barriers but in religion. The same Persian who sacrifices a benefactor, a son, a father, in obedience to a royal *firman*, would rather die than drink wine, or be guilty of any violation of the precepts of the Koran. The despotic Nadir Shah could vanquish powerful rivals, destroy the Sofis, conquer India, threaten Turkey, and strike terror into all the East: but when he attempted to alter religious opinions, his efforts totally failed.

Notwithstanding the preceding statement of the nature of the royal power, and the excesses to which it tends, it would be wrong to assert that all the monarchs of Persia have been tyrants. The present sovereign, Feth Ali Shah, enjoys the affection of his subjects; and travellers relate of him but few of those acts of barbarity which were so frequent under most of his predecessors. It ought moreover to be observed, that the people are seldom the victims of the cruel caprices of the monarch, which generally reach only such grandees as are about his person. At the court of Persia, a man frequently goes to sleep in prosperity, and awakes stripped of every thing; yet the Persian is never the wiser for these catastrophes: there, as in every other country, the crowd of courtiers eagerly push forward on the road to fortune and favour.



CHAPTER II.

OF THE GREAT OFFICERS OF THE EMPIRE.



SECTION I.

OF THE ITIMAD-AD-DOWLAH, OR PRIME MINISTER.

THE first personage of the kingdom, next to the sovereign, is the *Itimad-ad-dowlah*, whose dignity corresponds with that of Grand Vizir among the Turks, or our prime minister. In petitions addressed to him he is styled *Visir azem*—supreme Visir, but in familiar language he is denominated *Itimad-ad-dowlah*, a compound word signifying pillar of the empire. This minister

is in fact the axis round which the enormous mass of the affairs of the state revolves. His favour is the only way to obtain appointments and emoluments from the prince: no application reaches the royal ear, unless transmitted through and supported by him. He negotiates with the ambassadors of foreign powers, and concludes or breaks treaties at pleasure. The finances are under his direction, and no public or royal domain can be alienated, no innovation made in the government, and no point whatever decided, without his participation. No document is valid unless it be furnished with his seal, and the governors of provinces act only by his instructions.

The *Itimad-ad-dowlah* repairs early in the morning to the *Divan-kanch*, in the palace. There he examines petitions, reads the despatches of the governors, prepares instructions for them, and takes the orders of the king. He communicates with him very rarely *viva voce*, but in general through the medium of eunuchs, or of some officer who has the right of access to the interior of the palace. In formal audiences, he stands at some distance from the throne, on the right, explains the matters to be deliberated upon, reads papers connected with them, gives his opinion, and takes the decisions of the king. In the excursions made by the sovereign, either for pleasure or to show himself to his subjects, the *Itimad-ad-dowlah* is commonly on his right; and if he be a man of any capacity, he then obtains what he has long solicited: for he disposes the mind of the prince by animated conversation, by happy sallies, by well-timed praises; and then turning the discourse to the object of his wishes, he rarely meets with a refusal. But by what privations, what toil, what anxiety does he not purchase the honour of being the second personage, or rather the first slave, in the empire? No sooner has the favour of the sovereign exalted a subject to the dignity of *Itimad-ad-dowlah*, no sooner is his utmost ambition gratified, than he becomes a stranger to peace and happiness. His days belong to the state; he passes them in the palace, away from his women, his children, and the objects of his affection. His nights are disturbed by the constant apprehension lest some courtier who is his enemy, and has contrived to win the good graces of the monarch at an entertainment; some eunuch, whom he has affronted; some female, who shares the king's couch, and whose parents have met with some refusal from him; or lastly the queen-mother, whose schemes he has thwarted, may be secretly preparing his downfall. He frequently owes his high fortune to chance: why then may not his disgrace be the work of intrigue? This apprehension identifies itself with his being, haunts him wherever he goes, and shows him the elevation of his rank merely as a measure of the depth of his possible fall.

The *Itimad-ad-dowlah* has two methods of retaining his dignity, and the duration of his power depends on the address with which he employs them. These are, to remove by exile or death those from whom he has any thing to fear; and to flatter the vanity and the passions of the sovereign, by magnifying his most insignificant exploits, ascribing to him qualities which he does not possess, and administering to his pleasures.

The post of *Itimad-ad-dowlah* is at present filled by Mirza Sheffea, an old man, of agreeable and easy manners, who surpasses all his countrymen in political knowledge, and not only has very accurate views respecting the interests of Persia, but is not wholly ignorant of those of the European nations.

The following picture of this old minister, was drawn by Kotzebue, in 1817:—

His Excellency is eighty years of age, and of small stature. His voice sounds as if it issued from the grave. He is vain, rouses, and affects an effeminate elegance of manners. In other respects he is really a phenomenon, for he has filled the post of prime minister during the last forty-five years. He said, that, notwithstanding his arduous occupations, the administration of the government under a sovereign like the present was a delight, and by no means too much for his advanced age: whereas the predecessor of his majesty, Aga Mohammed Khan, had frequently harassed him to such a degree, that, notwithstanding the unbounded love which he bore to his country, he had often been on the point of retiring from his office, and even from Persia. We had no difficulty in believing his Excellency, for the treatment which he experienced from his former master was truly barbarous.

Aga-Mohammed-Khan (uncle to the present king) was a eunuch, who, by a successful conspiracy, obtained possession of the throne, and in order to maintain it committed every imaginable act of cruelty. His condition may have contributed to increase his natural hatred of mankind. Determined to be dissatisfied, he sometimes placed confidence indiscriminately in all; at others, in none: and in the end, he distrusted even himself. Addicted to drinking, he would forget one day the orders which he had given on the preceding: and he roared like a maniac, at the sight of the unfortunate creatures, frequently his own favourites, who had been sacrificed by his command. It is not surprising, that with such a character, he should have united a passion for war, which nevertheless, he conducted disgracefully. He was finally murdered by his own guards.

Mirza Sheffea was long the prime minister of this monster. He was obliged to be constantly near his person, and rarely escaped humiliation or insult, of which the following anecdote

affords a striking instance. The minister had daily to take minutes of the orders of the tyrant, which the latter dictated while stretched out on a carpet. If he was in an ill-humour, he would generally accompany them with expressions personally disrespectful to the minister; and on one occasion, probably when intoxicated, he abused Mirza Sheffea, saying, that he was continually plaguing him; that he left him no rest; and that he took delight in tormenting him, and in disturbing his slumbers. The minister continued writing, till his majesty's cushion flew at his head. Trembling with fright, he still proceeded with his writing. The diamond *kallioon* followed the cushion; and after that, every thing else within reach; and the king concluded with firing a pistol at the object of his fury. The ball passed through the minister's beard and lodged in his shoulder. He fell, and was carried away. The Shah soon fell asleep. Several months elapsed before the minister recovered from his wound, and he could not therefore appear at court. In the mean time, Aga-Mohammed did not once inquire after him: but when he got better, he returned to court, and administered the government as usual.

On another occasion, the bowstring was actually round his neck, when luckily he produced a Koran which he always carried about him, and at the sight of the sacred volume the Shah granted him his life. Notwithstanding this treatment, the old minister said, that had he accompanied Aga Mohammed in his wars, he would certainly not have been murdered.

SECTION II.

OF THE AMEEN-AD-DOWLAH, OR SECOND MINISTER.

The second minister in Persia is now known by the title of *Ameen-ad-dowlah*. This title is a new one, and not to be found in the older travellers. It seems probable, that this minister has superseded the *nazir*, who, in Chardin's time, was the steward of the domains and effects of the crown, and whose functions have perhaps been extended. Morier calls him lord-treasurer, and says that he has a *nazir* or deputy. According to the same traveller, the *Ameen-ad-dowlah* defrays the expenses of the royal household, clothes the king's servants, furnishes the *khilauts* or robes of honour, and provides for the princes and the women. When one of the latter has reached the fifth month of pregnancy, she sends him a list of all the articles requisite for the infant to which she expects to give birth. The *Ameen-ad-dowlah* is obliged to supply them immediately. That he may be able to perform this service with precision, he keeps apparel for persons of all ages deposited in immense magazines. It is also the duty of this minister to have every year new apartments constructed

in the seraglio for the new comers admitted into it, and to furnish them with all the requisite utensils, which must be of silver.

This statement is confirmed by Kinnier, who farther informs us that the *Ameen-ad-dowlah* is charged with the administration of the interior or the home department, including the collection of the revenues, the cultivation of the lands, &c.

Hadjee Mohammed Hussain Khan, the present *Ameen-ad-dowlah*, was originally a green-grocer in Ispahan, of which city he is a native. From this humble station, he rose successively to be deputy of his division, mayor of the city, and chief of a rich and extensive district near Ispahan, where he acquired great reputation for his good government. He afterwards made himself acceptable in the eyes of the late king, by a large *pesh-keesh* or present; and as the then governor of Ispahan was a man of dissolute life, oppressive and unjust, he succeeded in deposing him, and was himself appointed *beylerbey*. Here, from his intimate knowledge of the markets, and of all the resources of the city and its inhabitants, he created a larger revenue than had ever before been collected. He became the partner of every shopkeeper, of every farmer, and of every merchant; setting up those with capitals who were in want, and increasing the means of others who were in trade. He thus appeared to confer benefits, when by his numerous monopolies he was raising the price of almost every commodity. As, however, this revenue was apparently acquired without oppression, his reputation as a financier greatly increased: in spite of the opposition of his enemies, he advanced rapidly in the favour of the reigning monarch, and in the honours to which it led. On the accession of the present king, his zeal, his devotedness, and above all his presents, secured to him a continuation of the royal favour; and at length he rose, in 1807, to the dignity of *Ameen-ad-dowlah*, or second visir of the state. How he acquired the wealth which enabled him to emerge from the green-grocer's stall, is not exactly known. His enemies assert, that during the last civil wars in Persia, a string of Jaafer Khan's mules were passing close to his house in the middle of the night, when two of them were accidentally detached from the rest, and strayed into his yard: they happened to be loaded with precious stones and other articles of great value, which, on the subsequent destruction of that prince, he appropriated to himself.

There cannot be a stronger instance than he is, of the few qualifications requisite to become a statesman in Persia. Illiterate as any green-grocer may well be supposed, necessity has obliged him, since his elevation, to learn to read and write: but he has succeeded so ill, that he can scarcely make out a common note, or join two words together in writing. At an audience of the

king, being one day called upon to read a list of presents just received, he made so gross a mistake, that his majesty was extremely angry, and about to inflict summary punishment, when he extricated himself from the dilemma, by offering on the spot a large sum of money as an apology for his ignorance.

In his particular department, however, that of raising money to feed the king's coffers, perhaps no man in Persia has ever surpassed him; and with all this, the people of Ispahan, from whom the greater part of his riches are derived, are in general very well disposed towards him. He takes great pride in the improvement of the city and its environs, and with evident success. The public buildings have been repaired and beautified, during his administration; the cultivation has considerably increased, and there is a more general appearance of affluence and prosperity.

It is asserted that Hadjee Mohammed, impressed with the precarious nature of court favour in so arbitrary a monarchy, is in the habit of annually remitting considerable sums to his father, who lives near Bagdad, in order to provide a resource for himself in case of disgrace.

SECTION III.

OF THE *VACA-NEVIZ*, OR SECRETARY OF STATE.

We have not met with any mention of this dignity in modern travellers, though it still exists. Morier introduces, among the Persian ministers, the secretary-in-chief; and Kinnier informs us, that the events of Feth-Ali's reign are regularly written by the royal historiographer, who is no other than the *vaca-neviz*, or writer of occurrences. Kämpfer calls him chief secretary of state, and adds, that he is styled *viziri-chep*, or visir of the left, because his place is on the left of the king. The duty of the *vaca-neviz* consists in keeping an accurate register of all the decisions and decrees of the king; in examining all the acts of his authority; in reporting either to his majesty in person, or to his ministers, all the important events which occur throughout the empire, and in carefully committing them to writing. He is also keeper of the archives of the state, and of the letters and notes of foreign potentates and their ministers, of treaties of peace, and all diplomatic papers. When any difficulty arises in the administration, the *vaca-neviz* is consulted, that the conduct pursued, or the decision adopted, on a like occasion, may be followed as a precedent. Thus the *vaca-neviz* is both secretary, keeper of the archives, and historiographer of the state. It is said, that on the first day of the year, he reads, before the king and the whole court, a sketch of the events of the preceding

year. In this respect, the dignity must be of very high antiquity, as its origin must date at least so far back as the time of Ahasuerus.

SECTION IV.

OF THE MEER-AUB, OR PRINCE OF THE WATERS.

This post we place among the highest dignitaries, not so much on account of its rank as its importance. The reader may recollect what has already been said concerning the extreme dryness of the soil in Persia. There the least rill is a blessing of heaven; the smallest reservoir for collecting rain-water, a treasure which each would strive to appropriate to himself exclusively, did not government regulate the distribution of its contents. The *meer-aub* is the agent appointed by the supreme power to superintend this distribution of the water of the rivers or springs, which is made monthly, in the following manner.

On the canal which conducts the water into the field, is put a circular bowl of very thin copper, with a small hole in the middle: at this hole, the water slowly enters. When the bowl sinks to the bottom, the measure is complete. This operation is repeated till the necessary quantity is furnished. The proprietor pays in proportion to the number of bowls thus filled. The price of the water varies according to the nature and situation. River water is dearer than spring water.

Each province has its *meer-aub*, under whom there are numerous agents for conducting streams from district to district, and from field to field. His income is immense, for his extortion has no other bounds than his avarice. His favour is of greater importance to the cultivator of the soil than that of the prime minister. His patronage is therefore purchased, and his probity is assailed in a thousand ways by those who are solicitous to obtain a little more water than their neighbours, or to induce him to change the direction of a canal.

SECTION V.

OF THE BEYLERBEYS, OR GOVERNORS OF PROVINCES.

The kingdom of Persia is at present divided into several extensive departments, over which are placed princes of the blood, who have under them officers with the title of *Beylerbey*, or Bey of Beys. They are also styled *Arkan-ad-dowlah*, or pillars of the empire.

The *Beylerbeys* hold the first rank in the empire, after the *Itimad* and the *Ameen-ad-dowlah*; nay, they are more powerful than those ministers, for they are absolute in their governments, frequently resist the royal authority, and in some provinces actu-

ally erect themselves into petty independent princes. Their courts are little inferior in splendour to that of the sovereign; they are composed of the same officers, only their establishments are not so numerous. This, however, is rather a picture of what has been the case under former monarchs; for the present king has had the prudence to adopt a politic precaution for ensuring the permanence of his authority.

When Hadjee Ibrahim had advanced him to the throne, he of course held the appointment of visir: but the king, to counteract the power of this high office, conferred similar dignities on two other persons, who were looked upon as the second and third ministers of state. The authority, therefore, of visir of the empire was divided among three persons; and though Hadjee Ibrahim undoubtedly enjoyed by far the greater share of influence, yet, when the king found it politic to make away with his benefactor, he had formed a party who readily undertook the execution of his wishes.

Feth Ali has pursued the same system in all the cities of his empire. The governors of districts may be considered as the civil officers of the state: they have no authority over the troops; but the commanders, in cases of exigence or alarm, are subject to their requisitions. The commandant of the citadel is another independent authority; so that the office of *Beylerbey*, which was formerly committed to the charge of one person, is now divided among a considerable number; and, as it is impossible for so many interests to coalesce, the king is sure to be informed of whatever may be done contrary to his orders. His government has been disturbed by only two rebellions; and it is probably owing to this system of counteracting the power and authority of his ministers and officers of state, that his reign has been of longer duration than is usually the case in despotic monarchies.

Each of the *Beylerbeys* is to the utmost extent of his power a despot, and the connivance of the king is purchased with extraordinary presents. This system of tyranny descends in a successive series from the king to the servants of his governors and officers of state: it returns, however, to its first source, and the government requires pecuniary satisfaction for the oppressive administration of its servants. A striking illustration of this system is given by Mr. Morier:

Mahomed Nebes Khan, from having been originally a scribe, and successively a shopkeeper, a merchant, an ambassador, and governor of Bushire, was at length raised to the visirship of the province of Fars, where, like all the Persians in authority, he was guilty of great extortions. He was sent for by the king, and his adventures afford a specimen of what generally happens

to every Persian who has grown into power from his riches. Before he ventured to enter the capital, he sent for his son, who was an attendant on the court, of whom he inquired what were the king's intentions towards him, and what fear there might be for his safety. The king, in order to cloak his game, conferred the dignity of Khan on the son previously to seeing the father, which so blinded him, that he entered the city in full confidence of the monarch's favour. He had been accompanied by Mirza Ahady, governor of the great districts of Corbal and Fars, and his coadjutor in his system of extortion. They were summoned to appear before the king some days after their arrival, and were then informed that they were to give an account of their respective offices. After they had stood some time before the king, he said: "Well, have you brought me no *peshkeesh* (present)?" They remained silent. "Where are the 70,000 toomauns, the arrears of the tribute of Fars; of course you have brought that?" Mirza Ahady answered, that "all that was due had been sent." The king then turned to Mahomed Nebes, who answered the same thing. "Call the *ferashes*," exclaimed the king, "and beat these rogues till they die." The *ferashes* came and beat them violently; and when they attempted to say any thing in their own defence, they smote them on the mouth with a shoe, the heel of which was shod with iron. The king's wrath increased with the violence of the blows, until it became so great, that he ordered them to be thrown out of the window, which was more than seventy feet from the ground. At this critical moment came the *Ameen-ad-dowlah*, who entreated the king to spare their lives, saying that he would be security for the payment of their arrears. Upon this the royal anger ceased, and he permitted the culprits to depart by the less expeditious mode of the staircase. Mirza Ahady was imprisoned; Mahomed Nebes soon afterwards received a *khi-laut* as a palliative for the blows he had received, and as a *douceur* to keep him in a good humour till he should disclose the secrets of his riches, and exert himself to pay the full demands of the king upon him.

SECTION VI.

OF THE TITLES OF MIRZA AND KHAN.

In Persia there are no nobility, according to the acceptance of that term in Europe. In that country, no dignity, no office, is hereditary; yet there are titles which denote the birth or rank of the persons who bear them: such are those of *Mirza* and *Khan*.

Mirza is a Persian compound word, a contraction from *mir-zadeh*, which signifies, son of an emir or prince. This title is very

common in Persia: but it would be wrong to suppose that all who assume it are of high birth. It is applied alike to the lawyer, the physician, and the son of the king: its position before or after the name constitutes its value. The princes alone can subjoin it to their proper names, as Abbas Mirza, Hussain Mirza: but as a prefix to the name, it may be assumed by, or conferred on any person. It is right, however, to observe, that none but well-educated men, or such as follow respectable professions, or hold honourable posts, take the title of *mirza*.

The title of *khan* was formerly given to the governors of provinces only. It is of Tartar origin, and very ancient. Quintus Curtius mentions several princes conquered by Alexander, who bore it, as Portican, Oxican, Musican; which shows that it was subjoined to the name in those times, as at present. The number of Persians now honoured with the title of *khan*, is very great. It is conferred by the king either on his own subjects to reward their services, or on foreigners as a mark of honour and esteem. Feth Ali bestowed it by letters patent on some of the members of the French embassy sent to Persia under General Gardanne. So much is certain, that it ought to be borne exclusively by military men, and that those who have obtained it by martial achievements despise others who are indebted for it solely to the favour of the prince.

The ceremony attending the creation of a *khan*, is very simple. The king sends a *khilaut*, or robe of honour, which will hereafter be more particularly described, to the person whom he honours with this title, accompanied with a *firman*, or two letters, the one relating to the present of the *khilaut*, and the other conferring the title. This *firman* the receiver must wear three days, attached to the top of his turban.



CHAPTER III.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCES AND CITIES.

THE empire, as has just been observed, is divided into several *beylerbeylik*. These are subdivided into districts called *balook*, under officers bearing the title of *khan*, *xabî*, or *hakim*, according to the extent of their jurisdiction.

Each considerable town has, besides its governor, a *kelaunter* or mayor, whose business it is to collect the taxes. He is a magistrate of high rank, who holds his office of the crown, and appears once a year before the king, an honour not granted to magistrates of an inferior class. His salary is paid out of the royal exchequer. The *kelaunter* is the channel through which

the petitions of the people are presented, and their wants made known to the king: he is on all occasions the representative of the *rayas* or subjects. He is obliged by his office to ascertain the amount of the property possessed by persons under his jurisdiction, for he has to prepare the list of assessments; and if the paper fixing the sum at which each is assessed were not furnished with his seal, the individual would pay no attention to it at the time of collecting the imposts. The *kelaunter*, moreover, acts as judge in cases of theft or quarrels: his decisions, which are, or ought to be, agreeable to the established usage, are given on the spot. On this account he is styled *hakim-ourf*, judge of the common law. It is his duty also to carry into execution the sentences of the civil magistrate.

The cities of Persia are usually divided into *mahals*, or quarters. Each *mahal* is under the superintendence of a *ket-khoda*, who is accountable to the *kelaunter*. There is no salary attached to this office, which is merely honorary, and is filled by the most reputable person in the quarter. The duties imposed by it consist in rendering an accurate account even of the most trifling circumstances, such as births, marriages, natural deaths, robberies, quarrels, &c.; and in ascertaining the occupations and means of subsistence of all the inhabitants of the quarter. When troops arrive in a town, the governor assembles the *ket-khodas*, and informs them of the number for whom lodging and subsistence are required: and it is their business to quarter the troops and levy the rations in such a manner that the charge shall fall equally on every inhabitant. This division of towns into *mahals*, and the establishment of *ket-khodas*, are of infinite service to the rebel who makes himself master of a city: it furnishes him with a systematic plan of pillage, which favours the lower classes of the people, but bears so much the harder upon the rich.

It is a custom that has been followed ever since the most ancient times, not to commit the custody of the citadel of a town to the governor, but to an officer called *kutwall*, who is appointed by the king or the *beylerbey*, and wholly independent of the *kelaunter*.

Besides the *kelaunter*, the *ket-khoda*, and the *kutwall*, there are in every town other officers for the maintenance of order, such as the *darogha*, the *meer-usus*, and the *mohtusib*. The *darogha*, or superintendent of the bazars or markets, holds his office from the government. He settles the disputes that occur in the markets, hears complaints, and decides without appeal. If a shopkeeper refuses to execute, or violates his agreement, and complaint is made to the *darogha*, he obliges him to perform it: or if a debtor should prove that he is totally unable to

satisfy claims made upon him, he grants a certain time for the fulfilment of his contract. But if the person complained against be of infamous character, the *darogha* imposes a fine on him, and orders him to be punished or put in confinement. This magistrate also superintends the morals of the people; and if he detects any of them drinking wine, or in the society of courtesans, he compels them to purchase his connivance at no small expense.

Mr. Scott Waring mentions, as a fact within his own knowledge, that the *darogha* of Shiraz received fifty toomauns (above 40*l.*) from an unfortunate Armenian, who was caught in the house of a prostitute, and he thought he conferred a favour on the culprit by allowing him to escape at so easy a rate. Hence the office of *darogha* is extremely lucrative: for, in addition to the presents and bribes which he is in the habit of receiving, the shopkeepers cheerfully supply him gratuitously with every thing he requires, that they may ensure his protection and favour.

The appointment of the *meer-usus*, or head of the watch, who is also styled *kecheekdjee-bashee*, nearly resembles that of *darogha*, the latter superintending the police in the day-time, and the former at night. It is his office to preserve the peace of the city, to apprehend persons found in the streets at improper hours, and to prevent robberies. He has under him, for this purpose, a number of people, who patrol the streets and keep watch on the house-tops. Each shopkeeper contributes two-pence or three-pence, monthly, to defray the expenses of this establishment. If a housekeeper is robbed, the *meer-usus* is accountable for the robbery, and is obliged either to recover the property stolen, or to pay the amount. The latter rarely happens; for this officer is generally connected with all the thieves in the city, and can answer for their obedience to his orders. They rob, therefore, in places not under his protection; and, as he is commonly supposed to participate in their plunder, they are connected together by a common interest.

The *mohtusib* is an inspector, whose business it is to regulate the price of every article which is sold in the bazar, and to see that the weights are of the proper standard. This duty is usually performed once a week; and if he convicts any person of using false weights, the punishment frequently is death.

Small towns and villages are governed by a *ket-khoda*, who has under him a *pak-kiar*, or deputy. The latter attends to the details of the duty, and reports to his principal. Lastly, there is no place, how insignificant soever, but what is under the superintendence of a *reis*, or chief.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE NATURE OF LANDED PROPERTY.

IN Persia, there are, properly speaking, no freehold lands: they are held by leases for specific periods, subject to the payment of certain rents. In Chardin's time, these leases were for a term of ninety-nine years, and renewable at the expiration of that term: this system seems to have undergone little alteration.

At present, there are two grand divisions of land in Persia, the one called *shahee*, the other *urbabee*. The former is the royal domain, *kalisseh*; the latter is held by subjects. One-eighth of the lands of Fars and Irak is probably possessed by the king, and the remainder is the property of the subject.

Those who cultivate land belonging to the king, pay a rent of half the produce, after making a deduction on account of seed. The king, however, supplies cattle for drawing water, and digs wells at his own expense.

The *urbabee* land is held in general by some person of consequence, who cultivates it for himself. He furnishes seed, and cattle to plough and draw water; and after deducting the quantity of seed advanced, he assigns a fifth part of the produce to the cultivators, and a tenth part is the tax paid to government. Should a labouring man cultivate his own land, he merely pays a tax to government, and appropriates the remainder to himself.

The proprietor, or more correctly speaking the tenant, cannot let the lands which he holds lie uncultivated; or if he does, he is still obliged to pay the same tax as if they were producing full crops: but as it is his interest, as well as that of the government, to derive the utmost profit from his land by judicious cultivation, this is a case which must rarely occur.

When lands are confiscated for any crime committed by the tenant, they then become *zehti shah*, or droits of the crown, and belong to the sovereign till he pleases to restore them to the family. The king, however, in general allots a portion of the produce of these lands to the children of the culprit.

As the greatest part of the land in Persia is watered by artificial means, its value, of course, depends on the abundance or scarcity of this necessary article. Land that is well watered sells for about twelve pounds sterling a *jureeb*, which nearly corresponds with our acre, and decreases in value to two pounds.

Land situated on the banks of a river pays no greater tax to government, than that which is watered by artificial means. If a person occupies a portion of waste land, which he brings into a state of cultivation, and which has no claimant, he enjoys an

exemption from taxes for a certain period, and is at full liberty to bequeath it to his children, or to dispose of it in any manner he may think proper.



CHAPTER V.

OF THE SOURCES OF THE REVENUE OF THE STATE.

ALL the imposts paid by the subject, are included in the three denominations of *malieh*, *sadeer*, and *peshkeesh*.

The *malieh* are the taxes levied, in money or in kind, on land and towns. They are paid in kind, on corn, silk, cotton, and other articles of that sort; and in money, on vegetables, fruit, and other less considerable productions of the soil. These taxes were formerly only one-tenth, but are now one-fifth, of the produce: they are regulated by the number of oxen kept by the cultivator: thus, it is assumed that one ox is sufficient to do the work of a certain quantity of land, and this quantity is multiplied by the number of cattle. For the taxes in kind, the produce of a *jureeb*, or acre, is calculated, and the amount of the tax is deduced from this estimate.

The amount of the taxes paid by towns, is governed, not by the number of the inhabitants, but of the houses. In general, a town is taxed for a whole district, and its magistrates fix the quota to be paid by the dependent villages. The collector is called *Moustoufee*: it is his duty to keep a register of the value, the produce, and the annual amount of the taxes of the lands within his jurisdiction, and a regular statement of the receipts and disbursements made on account of government. The *Kelaunter* furnishes the troops with provisions, by giving an order countersigned by the *Moustoufee* on the *Umbardar* or keeper of the royal granaries: for in the various parts of Persia, there are royal granaries established for receiving the rents and taxes of government, which are entrusted to the management of an *Umbardar*. The *Hakim*, who is invested with the general control over these officers, enforces the claims of government either by punishing or confining the cultivators. These officers of course have under them a number of subordinate agents, who are dispersed among the different villages within the circuit of their authority, and make reports of all occurrences to their immediate superiors.

When government is in want of money, it applies to the *Hakim*, or to the *Moustoufee*, stating the sum required. These officers have a right to increase it for their own profit, and are

at no loss for means of extortion. Besides, most of the offices of this kind are sold by government, and the price paid for them regulates the degree of oppression that is exercised: this practice is general, down to the very lowest stages. The whole body of collectors is a poisoned spring, and every stream that flows from it is infected. Let the payment of a certain sum be required of the humblest agent, and it matters not how it is levied: he has no other standard than his conscience. I have repeatedly seen, says Mr. Scott Waring, the servants of the prince's dependents enter a village and seize whatever they require, without making the smallest remuneration to the inhabitants. If the villagers evinced the least reluctance, they were threatened with the bastinado, the usual recompense which a poor man in Persia receives from his superior.

The *sadeer* is an arbitrary tax, raised on extraordinary occasions, such as the passage of a prince, grand dignitary, ambassador, or body of troops. The *sadeer* is fixed upon the same system as the *malieh*.

The presents which the governors are obliged to make to the king, at the festival of the *Nowroose*, or new-year's day, and called *peshkeesh*, are also levied upon the people.

From the preceding statement, it appears, that the cultivator is in the worst situation in Persia, and that the tradesman or shopkeeper fares much better. The latter pays a particular tax, it is true; but the merchant is not liable to any other than the duty of customs.

The customs are under the direction of several officers independent of one another, being farmed out by government to the highest bidder. No difference is made in favour of the produce of Persia, nor are the duties upon the manufactures of one country higher than upon those of another: but the rate is not inviolable. At Bushire, the duty on goods imported into Persia amounts to about five per cent., and at Shiraz a duty of two and a half per cent. is levied. A caravan, going to any of the cities of Irak from Bushire, must pay the duties at Shiraz; if it passes Ispahan, at that city; and in short, at every city it may pass through, where duties are levied: so that, by the time it reaches the Caspian Sea, the merchants may probably have paid thirty per cent. on their goods.

The classes of people who pay the heaviest tax to government, are the female dancers and the votaries of pleasure. They exercise their professions under the immediate patronage of the governor: their names, ages, and places of abode, are carefully registered; and if one should die or marry, another instantly supplies her place. They are divided into classes agreeably to

their merits and the estimation in which they are held, and each class inhabits separate streets.

Kinnier is of opinion that the revenue arising from land and merchandise does not exceed three millions sterling.



CHAPTER VI. OF THE MILITARY FORCE.

SECTION I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE Persian army is divided into the king's troops and those of the state: the former are regulars; the latter might not inaptly be termed militia.

The king's guards, those of the princes, and the garrisons of the towns, compose the regular troops, to whom we apply this term because they are under a particular discipline, and are permanently employed. Having treated in another place of the guards of the king and princes, we shall confine the following observations to the militia.

The warlike tribes spread over the country, form its real military force: it is these that furnish the militia. When the king is going to war, he intimates his intention to their different chiefs, who are obliged to repair with their contingents to the royal camp: the number of these contingents is governed by the population of the tribe. Each town and village has to furnish its quota. In this manner, Feth Ali Shah might raise probably from 150,000 to 200,000 men, in case of emergency.

By way of pay, each officer and soldier receives a grant of land; but when they take the field, they have pay, and a *suroosat*, or allowance of barley and straw for their horses, and wheat, rice, and butter, for themselves. They receive also something under the head of *inams* or presents. They must find their own arms, horses, and clothing, and are supplied with nothing but ammunition.

The Persian armies are composed of infantry and cavalry. The infantry are generally employed at sieges; but as their services are seldom required, they are for that reason very indifferent soldiers. They are employed to discharge a piece of cannon perhaps once in an hour; and as long as they hit the wall, they are considered to be well qualified for effecting a breach. If there are infantry and guns, a body of *bildars*, or pioneers, accompany the army.

It was to its cavalry that Persia in ancient times owed its military glory, and it still constitutes the chief force of the kingdom. The Persian is less ostentatious in the harness of his horse than the Turk. Luxury has given place to utility and convenience. Nadir Shah substituted to the Arabian stirrups and bit, a very simple bridle and iron stirrups. The Persian saddle, though lighter than that of the Turks and Mamelukes, is not broad enough in the seat: it requires great practice to keep upon it, especially as the stirrups also are very narrow.

All the troops are in the immediate service of the king. They are commonly divided into regiments of one thousand men, commanded by a *Membashee*, then into hundreds over whom is a *Yoozbashee*, and then into tens under an *Oonbashee*, which literally signify, chief of a thousand, of one hundred, and of ten. The Khan of the tribe commands the whole. Each regiment has its standard. These standards are of every colour, and of every sort of rich stuff, and cut to a point. They bear for a motto, either the Mahometan profession of faith, or a passage of the Koran; and many of them display a lion with a rising sun, or the *dzou'lfecar*, or two-edged sword of Ali. It is a point of honour with them, as with our troops, to preserve the standard from falling into the hands of an enemy. The bearer of it is styled *Alemdar*. The *Alemdar-bashee*, or chief standard-bearer, is an important personage in the military hierarchy of the Persians.

It is inconceivable, says Mr. Scott Waring, with what ease an army in Persia is collected. In times of anarchy and confusion, every man who can purchase arms is a soldier. They flock to the nearest standard of rebellion, and retire on the approach of an enemy to their homes. They assemble to plunder, not to fight, and feel no compunction in deserting a chieftain who can no longer countenance their depredations. Many persons are reduced to the necessity of becoming soldiers; they have been plundered of their all, and therefore join the army in the hope of retrieving their losses. An army in Persia is nothing but an immense band of robbers, who are only held together by the expectation of plunder: success commands their services; they support no particular cause, but join the chief, whose affairs appear the most prosperous. The only tie upon their fidelity is the possession of their wives and families, or the influence which their commanders may have among them. The first is probably very inconsiderable, and the latter even more so, for the interest of the commander and his troops will be the same, and they are both actuated by the same principles. The danger of a military life in Persia does not deserve mention; and as the ad-





A CAMEL ARTILLERYMAN.

vantages are greater than in any other country, we ought not to be astonished at its being infested with hordes of licensed robbers, or that a chief should plunder his way to the throne.

SECTION II.

OF THE ARMS OF THE PERSIAN TROOPS.

The arms of the Persians are the scimitar, the carbine, the lance, the bow, and the noose. A horseman, when fully equipped, usually carries a pair of pistols either in his girdle, or at the saddle-bow, a carbine or a bow slung at his back by a transverse shoulder-belt, and a lance. The latter, which is very light, being made of bamboo, he carries in his right hand, and uses the bow with great dexterity and promptitude.

The use of the *kemend*, which is a long rope with a noose at one end, is of great antiquity in Persia. There exist paintings in illustration of the *Shah Nameh*, in which Roustam is represented catching his enemies with this noose, and dragging them after him. It is well known that the ancient Slavonians and Bulgarians employed this species of offensive weapon in war. At present, the *kemend* is but little used; it is said, however, that Ismael Bey, one of the king's generals, excels in the management of it.

The whole artillery of the Persians consisted till lately of a few field-pieces, and a number of swivels mounted on the backs of camels. A representation of a soldier belonging to the camel corps is given in the annexed engraving. The uniform of this corps is red, and something like the fashion of the British regimentals about twenty years ago. They wear a bright brass cap of a conical shape, with a bunch of cock's feathers stuck in the pointed top. The gunner is seated behind the swivel, which turns on a pivot at the point of the saddle in front; and on the back of the camel is fixed a small triangular red and green flag. There is nothing martial in their appearance, says Sir Robert Porter, and so little of dignity from the incongruity of their oddly-mixed half-European costume, with the Asiatic animals they ride, that the troop rather recalled to my risible faculties certain impressions connected with cavalcades I had seen in England, accompanying our splendid shows of wild beasts, than suggested the respectful ideas which belong to a regal escort.

Captain Kotzebue, who on several occasions saw some hundreds of this corps manœuvred, says, the guns are so light, that an artilleryman can take his piece on his back and run about with it. They do not attempt to take aim in firing: the gun lies on the ground, and is fired at random. They are never dis-

charged but in volleys, which are very powerful and do great execution from their number.

As to the field-pieces, they were, till the recent improvements in this branch of the service, of very little use. The wretched state of the roads on the frontiers prevented the transport of them from place to place, and the carriages were so miserably constructed, that they were sure to break with a few discharges, if they escaped being dashed in pieces by rocks or tumbled down precipices.

A Persian soldier armed cap-a-pie, observes Mr. Scott Waring, is of all figures the most ridiculous. It is really laughable to see how they encumber themselves with weapons of defence: their horses groan under the weight of their arms. These consist of a pair of pistols in their holsters, a single one slung in their waist, a carbine or a long Turkish gun, a sword, a dagger, and an immense long spear; for all these fire-arms they have separate ramrods, tied about their persons, powder-horns for loading, others for priming, and a variety of cartouch-boxes, filled with different sized cartridges. The rattling of all these things may be heard when they are a great way off. Their saddle and arms cannot weigh less than eighty pounds, an enormous addition to the horse's burden: they nevertheless consider themselves as light-armed troops, ridiculing the Turkish cavalry, who, they say, can take care of little else than their big boots and their cap.

The arms of the Persians are very good, particularly their swords, which are highly prized by the Turks. They are full of *jouhur*, or what is called damask, which, however, does not express the meaning of the word; for the *jouhur* is inherent in the steel. Tavernier says, that none but the Golconda steel can be damasked; but in this he is mistaken, as the Khorasan swords are more valuable than any others, the blade alone often costing twenty or thirty guineas.

SECTION III.

OF THE MILITARY ART AMONG THE PERSIANS.

It may be affirmed with truth, that till Abbas Mirza, the heir-apparent to the throne, undertook a few years since to reform the military system of the Persians, they had no idea of tactics and military engineering. They are wholly ignorant of the art of entrenchment and fortification; their camp consists of a circle surrounded with a few lines, and it is reputed to be impregnable when it is pitched on the bank of a river or against the declivity of a hill. The best fortified towns are encompassed with a wall built of mud mixed with straw, a few brick towers, and a ditch:

the means of attack, it is true, are in an exact ratio with those of defence; so that an obstacle which would scarcely stop a European regiment for an hour, here detains a victorious army several days.

In Persia, and indeed all over the East, the art of war consists in hovering about an enemy, falling unawares on his quarters, intercepting his provisions, depriving him of water by turning off the streams and filling the wells, and in attacking his troops when sinking under famine and fatigue. The cavalry, like all irregular cavalry, cannot act with uniformity; it would be unable to cope with a corps disciplined in the European manner, though its evolutions and movements are extremely rapid, and each individual excels in the management of the horse. They are accustomed to no more than two manœuvres, the one for attack, and the other for flight. The first consists in charging all together pellmell; stopping here and there in groups of four or five, sometimes at the distance of several yards from one another, and each in an opposite direction. The second manœuvre is to gallop at full speed, to pull up the horse all at once, to turn in the saddle, fire backward at an enemy, and gallop away again. On various occasions, the Persians have pursued in their wars with the Turks a system ruinous to the inhabitants of the country, but which has frequently delivered them from their enemies without their having occasion to strike a blow. When they have known beforehand the point of attack, they have carried away the whole population and laid the country entirely waste for the space of several days' journey; and when the foe has penetrated into this desert, they have harassed him incessantly and reduced him with the assistance of famine.

A fault inherent in the organization of their cavalry, which damps the courage of the men, and diminishes the chance of success in battle, is the custom of obliging the soldier to find his own arms and horse. These frequently constitute his whole property; and as the state grants no compensation in case of their loss, his chief care is to preserve them. On more than one occasion, this solicitude has proved fatal to the honour of the Persian arms.

In Persia, there is no distinction between the civilian and the military man; every subject suddenly turns soldier. The khan of a tribe exchanges his pastoral occupations for the command of troops; and the same is the case with regard to the subaltern officers. The general-in-chief, who is almost always the prime minister, quits the divan for the camp: hence the army is deficient in good officers.

It has been already observed, that the infantry are much worse than the cavalry. Mr. Scott Waring mentions an instance

which may serve as a specimen of their proficiency in military affairs. A salute was to be fired at Bushire, and as the guns were not shotted, they conceived that they might discharge them without any danger to the people who were crowded about them. They fired the guns, and several persons were killed on the spot.

One of the most remarkable facts in the modern history of Asia, is the introduction of European discipline in the armies of Persia, which owes this improvement solely to the superior intelligence and personal exertions of Abbas Mirza, the heir-apparent to the throne, for the following account of which we are indebted to Mr. Morier.

In one of the first interviews which this prince had with our ambassador, Sir Gore Ouseley, he described with great *naïveté*, the motives which induced him to attempt its introduction among his troops. He said, that he soon found out that it was in vain to fight the Russians unless he had soldiers like theirs: that their artillery was only to be opposed by artillery; and that all his efforts to make an impression upon them with his undisciplined rabble were uniformly unsuccessful. His first essays in discipline were attended with little success, because he had in the outset to combat the prejudices of the Persian recruits themselves, who rejected the idea of being assimilated in any manner to Europeans, and particularly to Russians, whom their national hatred made them despise, or perhaps their fear caused them to hate, more than all other Europeans. To efface such impressions, he was himself obliged to adopt a soldier's dress, and to submit to learn the military exercise from a Russian: he commenced with twenty or thirty men at a time, whom he caused to be drilled in a separate court by themselves, that they might not be exposed to the ridicule of the populace; and it was not till he ordered his nobles to follow the example and handle a musket, that he found his scheme making any progress. He had succeeded in teaching a few of his men the platoon exercise and some of the most common evolutions; yet probably he would have got no farther for want of officers, but for the arrival of the French embassy from Buonaparte, the officers of which were put into the command of large bodies, and they advanced his views to the utmost of his expectations. The English mission, which succeeded the French, also supplied him with officers, and his first wish was to raise a corps of artillery, which was done by lieutenant Lindsay, an officer of the Madras army, in a manner truly astonishing. The zeal of this officer was only to be equalled by the encouragement of the prince, who, putting himself above all prejudices, resisting the jealousy of his officers, and the cabal of courtiers, liberally adopted every method proposed, and supported lieutenant Lindsay against

every difficulty that was thrown in his way. He gave him full power to punish his recruits in any manner he chose, and unlimited control over his troop. It was only upon the article of shaving off beards, that the prince was inexorable; nor would the sacrifice of them have ever taken place, had it not happened that in firing guns before the prince, a powder-horn exploded in the hand of a gunner, who by good luck had been gifted with a long beard, which in an instant was blown away from his chin. Lieutenant Lindsay, seizing this opportunity to prove his argument on the encumbrance of beards to soldiers, immediately produced the scorched and mutilated gunner before the prince, who was so struck with his woful appearance, that the abolition of military beards was instantly decided upon.

The *serbaz*, or infantry, were placed under the command of Major Christie, of the Bombay army, an officer of the greatest merit, who inspired his troops with an *esprit de corps*, which manifested itself on many occasions. Abbas Mirza, who was partial to the corps disciplined partly by the French and partly by himself, thinking that it had acquired more steadiness from being longer embodied than Major Christie's, one day proposed a sham-fight, in which he would lead his corps, and Christie his. They were drawn out, and the prince's troops vigorously attacked those of Christie, who however, ordering a charge of bayonets, put the others to flight. Christie's men, ~~perhaps not fully understanding~~ that this was intended for play, and warmed by their success, were heard to exclaim: "Oh, that we had ball-cartridges!"

The prince complained to the ambassador, that the new system which he had introduced had still many enemies, and that the most powerful of them was his brother, Mahomed Ali Mirza, who had endeavoured to render him and his *nezam* (discipline) odious to the Persians, by attempting to show that, in adopting the customs of the infidels, he was subverting the religion of Islam, which, till this day, had been upheld by the same sword and the same discipline that had served Mahomed in its establishment. In order to counteract this, the prince caused a passage in the Koran, that is favourable to the improvement of the means of attack and defence in the cause of religion, to be copied, sealed, and approved by the chiefs of the land in Persia, and disseminated throughout the country.

The English officers employed in Persia still found many impediments in their way, originating from the confined ideas which the prince himself had of military science. The necessity of a strict subordination of ranks, seemed to him incomprehensible. But the greatest difficulties encountered by our officers, arose from the knavery and intrigue of the Persian officers

appointed by the prince to aid them in their different commands. The men themselves they found most docile and tractable, receiving the discipline more quickly than even Englishmen: but the moment a *mirza* or a *khan* interfered, all was trouble and dispute. Thus, for instance, a *mirza* who was appointed to pay the men, would keep a per-centage from each man for himself: sums which he received for the supplies of dress, furniture, &c. he would detain to trade with, or put out to usurious interest: nay, a man of some consequence was one day discovered to have stolen two muskets; and similar instances of knavery might be cited without end.

The Persians are greatly deficient in the soldier's first art, the art of dying. A Persian talking to one of our officers on that subject, said very ingenuously: "If there was no dying in the case, how gloriously the Persians would fight!" Their ideas of courage, indeed, are totally different from ours: they look upon it as a quality which a man may have or not, as he may feel at the moment. One of the king's generals, who has the reputation of being a courageous man, was not ashamed to own that he and a large body of troops had been kept at bay by two Russian soldiers, who alternately fired their muskets at them, and at length obliged them to move away. In talking of the Russians, they say that they are so divested of feeling, that rather than run away they will die on the spot.

Abbas Mirza, the prince-royal, is said to be personally brave; and in his different encounters with the Russians, he has risked himself farther than necessity required. He punishes cowardice: the following instance was witnessed by the British embassy. One of his generals, Mahomed Bey, had, on some emergency, quitted his post, and run away. The prince degraded him from his rank, tied his hands behind his back, put a wooden sword by his side, seated him on an ass, with his face towards the tail, and thus paraded him through the streets of Tabriz.

The citadel of Tabriz is the most interesting structure in that city, principally because it contains a proof of what the labour and ingenuity of a few Englishmen will accomplish, under all the disadvantages of a bad administration and want of resources. The prince originally intended to make it his own place of residence, but changed its destination, and converted it into an arsenal, where many of the European trades are in full activity. In the first yard are seen a range of guns, and all the accompaniments of artillery: a numerous body of carpenters and wheelwrights work with European tools, under the superintendence of a European. Farther on is a blacksmith's forge, and in another yard are piles of shot: while a series of apartments form workshops for saddlers and other artisans, and neatly ar-

ranged store-rooms. The Persians are delighted with this place, and it is frequently visited by the prince, who takes great pleasure in inspecting the works, and learning the uses and properties of every article. His chief delight is a machine for boring cannon, which is worked by a buffalo, and enables him to make guns of any calibre.



CHAPTER VII.

OF THE MODE OF INVESTITURE WITH OFFICES, AND OF THE KHILAUT, OR ROBE OF HONOUR.

THE customs of a nation separated from us by an immense space, are the more interesting the more they differ from our own. We also observe with pleasure the coincidences between both; as a traveller is delighted to meet with the plant of his own country in a distant land. In contemplating the manners and customs of the Persians, we rarely experience the latter kind of satisfaction: here all is new; but from this novelty springs the interest which we take in studying them.

Among these people, one and the same ceremony is frequently practised to exalt a man to dignity, or to strip him of it, and even to deprive him of his life.

When the king has selected one of his officers to fill any post whatever, the secretary of state prepares his commission on a paper two or three feet long, adorned with gold and painted with different colours. The best writers in the office are commonly chosen to engross documents of this kind. The imperial seal is placed at the top of the paper, within an ornament of gold and brilliant colours. This place belongs exclusively to the seal of the sovereign; for the position of that appendage denotes in the East the quality of the writer, as well as of the person to whom he writes. Thus, the royal seal is the only one put at the head of a letter; that of the princes is affixed lower down, and that of the ministers at the lowest extremity; lastly, the seal of persons of inferior rank is placed at the back of the letter.

The paper, so sealed, is put into a bag of very light gauze, and this bag is inclosed in another of gold brocade: after which, the whole is addressed to the person appointed to the office. The appointment is always accompanied with a *khilaut* or robe of honour, a sabre, and a dagger adorned with precious stones, if the office be of a military nature; or with a rich ink-horn, seven or eight inches long and one broad, if in the civil department.

When the new officer resides near the court, he puts on the *khilaut*, and repairs in it to the palace, at the first audience given by the king. An *Itchic Agasee*, or master of the ceremonies, conducts him to the foot of the throne. When he is at some distance from it, he falls on his knees, prostrates himself thrice on the ground, rises and takes his seat according to his new dignity. If he resides in another province, the reception of the royal letter and the *khilaut* takes place with great pomp: and this is one of the occasions on which the Persian grandees make the greatest display of magnificence. When the person on whom this honour is conferred is apprised of the time at which the bearer of the royal favour is expected to arrive, he goes out two or three miles to wait for him, either in a building erected for the purpose, and called *khilaut-kaneh*, house of *khilauts*, or in a tent. The magistrates of the city, the ministers of religion, the *looties* or buffoons, the dancing-girls, and a great concourse of people, accompanying him. Mr. Scott Waring estimated the number who attended a ceremony of the kind at Shiraz, either from necessity or curiosity, at twenty thousand. When the astrologers have fixed the lucky moment, the bearer of the letter and *khilaut* is introduced: each of them is placed on a richly ornamented tray. The whole assembly rises. The new officer makes a low obeisance, falls on his knees, and after a short prayer for the prosperity of the king, he rises, strips off his clothes and puts on the *khilaut*: after which, he respectfully raises the king's letter to his forehead before he opens it, and then reads it aloud. This ceremony being finished, he sits down, and receives the congratulations of all present. The cavalcade then sets out on its return to the city. The people throng the road, expressing their joy by obstreperous acclamations; the trumpets sound, and the musicians perform military marches. When the officer is of high dignity, the people break small glass tubes filled with sugar, and scatter them on the ground. When the king makes his public entry into a town, bullocks are killed by the way, and their heads being cut off, are thrown down before him as he approaches.

This is not the only occasion on which the *khilaut* is conferred: it is given by the king, in token of his approbation or favour, to such of his own subjects as are deemed deserving of the honour, and to ambassadors or other foreigners who visit his court. Its quality, and the number of articles of which it is composed, differ with the rank and favour of the receiver.

A common *khilaut* consists of a *caba* or coat; a *kemerbund*, or zone; a *gouchpeesh*, or shawl for the head: when it is intended to be more distinguishing, a sword or a dagger is added. To persons of distinction rich furs are given, such as a *catabee* or a

coerde; but when the *khilaut* is complete, it consists of exactly the same articles as the present which Cyrus made to Syennesis; namely, a horse with a golden bridle, a golden chain, a golden sword, besides the dress, which is complete in all its parts. The golden chain now sent is part of the horse furniture, and hangs over the animal's nose. From the Persepolitan marbles, it appears that the ancient Persians wore chains round the neck. Bracelets were also sent, and are shown by the same marbles to have been worn. By the golden sword is meant a sword whose scabbard is ornamented with gold—such are the Persian swords at this day.



CHAPTER VIII.

OF PRESENTS.

IN enumerating the different kinds of imposts, we have adverted to the *peshkeesh* or presents which the governors of provinces are obliged to make to the king or to his ministers: we might have added, that the lowest agent of power is frequently necessitated to pay this kind of tribute to his superiors. This system of presents is a remarkable circumstance, peculiar we should suppose to Persia. The king receives them from his ministers and the chief officers of the crown; the governor of a province from his subordinates; and they are wrung from the people, who never receive any. When the king wishes to reward one of his officers, he appoints him to carry a *khilaut* to some great dignitary: it is customary for the latter to acknowledge the king's present by another made to his envoy, and the value of which is frequently double that of the former. In this manner, the sovereign remunerates the services of his officers without any expense to himself.

The consideration and influence of an ambassador, depend on the value of the presents which he brings. As soon as he has delivered them, they are valued by the officers of the king, and deposited in the different storehouses to which from their nature they belong, after an inventory has been made of them. The amount at which they are estimated, determines the degree of respect to be paid to the ambassador.

It is impossible to conceive to what a degree this traffic of presents has degraded the Persian character, or the abject meanness to which it has furnished occasion. A governor of a town will not blush to return a present because it is not sufficiently valuable; and the donor is then obliged to add a more

sumptuous offering to excuse this heinous offence. A judge will refuse his decision, unless the parties previously bribe him to the exercise of his functions; nay, he will even claim a share of the profits of his servants. The Persian never gives any thing, but in expectation of a return. If he makes you a present without receiving at least one of equal value, he will not hesitate to demand it of you again.



PART II.

LEGISLATION.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PERSIAN LEGISLATION.

IN treating of a Mahometan state, it is necessary to examine at one and the same time its religion and the laws to which it is subject, because the former serves as a foundation to the latter. The Koran is both a religious and civil code; just in the same manner as the sacred books of many nations of antiquity, and of the Israelites in particular, furnished rules for the various circumstances of life. The legislator, in thus stamping his works with the seal of the deity, undoubtedly had recourse to this expedient, as the only one calculated to ensure to them the veneration and obedience of men.

The Persians have but a single term, *cheriet*, to express the canon law and the civil law. That they have a legislation cannot be questioned; but there is every reason to believe that its application is frequently perverted or evaded, and that though there exist laws, there is no justice.

The Musulman legislation takes the *lex talionis* for its basis. It is the developement of the principle: do not to others what you would not have them do to you; or receive an equivalent for whatever you do for them. Murder is accordingly punished by murder, and one wound by another, provided the latter be not more dangerous than the former. Such is the rule, but its application is subject to various modifications.

In this legislation, no judgment or decision, that of the king excepted, is without appeal: the same cause may be carried successively before all the tribunals in the kingdom.

Judicial decisions should be founded on—1. passages of the Koran: 2. prophetic traditions, *hadees*, that is judgment pro-

nounced by Mahomet. There is another authority, which is followed in the adjudication of punishments to be inflicted on criminals: this is the *ourf*, which might be aptly called the common law.

A celebrated Persian poet relates a story of a judge who committed a capital crime, and obtained pardon through the skill and eloquence of his defence. He might have cited also the example of a wealthy but stupid man, who extricated himself from a very serious affair by the sacrifice of large sums of money. These two facts would perfectly characterize the spirit and manner in which the law is administered.

One of the peculiar features of Persian jurisprudence, is its exemption from judicial forms. The most important suit is terminated in a few days; so that the parties are not reduced to beggary by the law's delay. A Persian cannot form any idea of our system of procedure, and the delays attendant on it: he prefers arbitrary but speedy justice, to the tediousness of a regular investigation. Still less has he any conception of the equality of all men in the sight of the law, though it is inculcated in the Koran, and though despotism and venality alone have destroyed it. The protection which the law affords to the poor against the oppression of the rich, appears to him as but a dream: because in Persia the humbler classes are always sacrificed to the opulent and the powerful; and the man of quality there enjoys a number of privileges, which are denied to people of low condition. A servant must not complain of the dishonesty or cruel treatment of a grandee; nor must a tradesman demand of him the payment of a debt. This is a species of injustice which custom has erected into a principle; but there is an infinity of other circumstances, in which the laws are violated. Hence arises the aversion of the Persians to law-suits: they are too well acquainted with the iniquity of judges, to wish to expose themselves to its effects.

In Persia, there is no profession corresponding with that of attorney or notary. When a contract is made, the only way to ensure its validity, is to obtain the signature of several witnesses: for it is right to observe, that in this case the system of evidence in civil and criminal matters is generally pursued agreeably to the Koran: but the sacred book also recommends to the faithful to be sincere in their testimony, were it even against themselves or their parents that they had to give evidence. The Persians are at no loss for reasons for evading this precept; and giving evidence is with them a profession, which, like any other, they will exercise for money.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

SINCE religion serves as a foundation to the laws, the administration of justice is committed to magistrates, whom we may, without impropriety, term ecclesiastical.

The chief of these magistrates is the Sheik-ul-Islam, an appellation which signifies the elder, teacher, or high-priest, of the Mahometan religion. This title was created, in 1423, by the Turkish emperor, Mahomet II., to be conferred on the celebrated Djelalzadeh, whom he raised to the dignity of mufti and cadi of Constantinople. Shah Ismail, founder of the dynasty of the Sofis, having instituted a new religious dignity in Persia, gave to the person who filled it, the title of Sheik-ul-Islam: and this prelate is now regarded as the head of religion in that country.

The Sheik-ul-Islam, whose peculiar costume is represented in the opposite plate, is the judge of all civil causes, the decision of which is governed by the text of the divine law, or the Koran. He also determines all religious causes.

The great cities of the empire, such as Ispahan, Shiraz, Tabreez, &c. have each a Sheik-ul-Islam; we believe, however, that they are not all of equal rank, but that the magistrate of the first of these cities is superior to the others.

The Cadi, whose authority was formerly very great, is subordinate to the Sheik-ul-Islam: his functions are of the same nature. Scrupulous Musulmans apply in preference to the Cadi, in consideration of the antiquity of that dignity, which has existed ever since the time of the first caliphs, whereas, that of Sheik is of modern creation.

The Mufti seems to be rather a lawyer than a magistrate, as is implied by his name, which is an Arabic participle, signifying "one who gives decisions founded on the Koran." He seems, in fact, to combine the characters of doctor of divinity and doctor of laws; for he is consulted on litigated matters, on points relative to religious doctrines and ceremonies, or to morality, and in civil and criminal causes. In Persia, the Mufti enjoys respect rather than authority: the Sheik-ul-Islam, the Cadi, the ministers, and the king himself, defer to his decisions. The annexed plate exhibits a faithful representation of the Persian Mufti, or doctor of divinity.

These are the only magistrates whose judgments are founded on the text of the Koran. Each of them has his separate tribunal, for there is no place set apart for the administration of jus-



HIGH PRIEST.



tice. This tribunal is in general a large room open towards a court or garden, and raised two or three feet above the ground. A kind of alcove of lattice-work is constructed in it, for the accommodation of females. The judge sits at the extremity of the apartment, in the eastern fashion: his head is covered with a large turban; the lower part of his face is concealed by a very black bushy beard; while his body is wrapped in an ample robe. He studies to assume an air of dignity, speaks little, gravely smokes his pipe, and by a happy silence, avoids those mistakes into which loquacious ignorance frequently falls. Long experience has given him a correct eye; and before he has even heard the parties, he can discover from their dress which of them is right and which wrong. Not a motion, not a gesture escapes him; he readily comprehends their signification, and in his decision he is guided much less by conscience than the expectation of a present. It is, indeed, the custom to make him one; the wealthy give stuffs, confectionary, or coffee; the artisan or the husbandman, a lamb, a sheep, or fruit; and it is necessary to conciliate the favour of his servant also, by some gift or other.

We have before adverted to the *ourf*, or common law. While the Sheik-ul-Islam and the Cadis decide according to the text of the Koran alone, the civil magistrates, such as the *kelaunter*, and the *darogha*, pronounce judgment in causes of minor importance, agreeably to the common law. They even give their decisions in civil matters, where the text of the *cheriet* would not always be conformable with justice. It is often the case, that the two authorities, that of the ecclesiastical magistrates and that of the civil magistrates, clash with one another; but the latter, having the effective force at their beck, carry their point without much difficulty.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE LAW OF MARRIAGE.

“THERE is no celibacy in Islamism: your wives are to you, and you are to your wives, what the garment is to the body.” Such are the terms in which the Koran speaks of marriage. Every male, on attaining the proper age, is therefore expected to take a female companion; whether it be a slave that he purchases, a woman whom he hires, or a legitimate wife whom he marries. His religion allows him the choice of these three modes; but at the same time, forbids him to hold intercourse with loose women, and to covet the wife of another.

A female slave, when purchased by a man, becomes his sole and entire property : he can dispose of her life, and even of her honour, as he pleases ; and he may raise her from servitude to the condition of a free woman, and even of a legitimate wife, without incurring any censure : such is the custom.

The Persians have a connexion of a singular nature, called *moutah*, which signifies the use of any thing for a certain time. It is in fact, a temporary marriage, the duration of which is fixed by the taker. A man whose circumstances do not permit him to form a jointure for a legitimate wife, takes one on lease ; and when he feels himself susceptible of constancy, or pride forbids him to give up to another what he has once enjoyed, the lease is sometimes for 99 years. The contract is executed before the Cadi or the Sheik-ul-Islam.

Legitimate marriage is called *naccak*, and is contracted before the same magistrates. The female brings nothing but moveables, such as clothes, jewels, &c. for her portion, and the husband is obliged to settle a jointure on her. The Koran authorizes a man to marry four lawful wives, provided he can maintain them. The same book proscribes marriages between relatives within a certain degree. A man may not marry his mother, his aunt, his daughter, his sister, his niece, his nurse, his foster-sister, his wife's mother or daughter, his son's wife, two sisters, or the wife of another. The husband is master of his wife's property, and has the control over her person ; it is his duty to maintain her, to provide for her wants, and to treat her with kindness. When any misunderstanding arises between husband and wife, they each choose an umpire out of their respective families, and refer the matter to his decision : but if their dispositions or tastes cannot be reconciled, a divorce is solicited, and granted by the judge. The wife then receives back her portion, and sometimes keeps half her jointure. A man may marry again after such separation, and be a second time divorced ; but the third marriage, though allowed, must not be contracted till the woman has married another man.

A wife who has been put away, cannot marry for three months after her repudiation ; neither can a widow till four months and ten nights after the decease of her husband.

If a wife commits adultery, and the fact is attested by four witnesses, the husband has a right to keep her a prisoner for life. It is lawful for the husband to chastise and even beat his wife, in case of misbehaviour.

The Koran treats also of the duties of parents to their children, and those of children to their parents. The mother may commit her infant to the care of a hired nurse ; but she acquires an additional merit in the sight of God, by suckling it for two

years with her own milk. The father is obliged to maintain his children, to educate them in the true religion, and to make them good Musulmans: on the other hand, it is the duty of a son to assist those to whom he owes his existence.

In Persia, and in the East, there is no such thing as illegitimacy: all the children are equal and legitimate in the eye of the law. The first-born is heir of right, even though he received life from a slave.

When a wife dies, half of her property belongs to her surviving husband, if she has no children: in the contrary case, he has but one-fourth. When the wife survives, she can claim one-fourth of her husband's property, but one-eighth only in case there are children.

According to Chardin, on the death of the father, the eldest son takes two-thirds of the property left by him, and the other third is divided among his brothers and sisters, in such proportion, that a girl receives only half as much as a boy.



CHAPTER IV.

OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

It has been already observed, that the Persians have no idea of our law proceedings; they have therefore neither counsel, nor attorneys, nor that swarm of blood-suckers, who, under different denominations, intermeddle in Europe in every thing, and while they keep the oyster for themselves, leave the shell only for their clients. In Persia, every man pleads his own cause.

The first step towards what we should call bringing an action against a person, is to present a petition to the judge, who writes on the margin of it an order for bringing before him the party against whom complaint is made. One of his officers immediately puts this order in execution. It is customary for the defendant to pay this officer for his trouble by the way: for he has no other salary than what arises from fees of this kind, and even these he has to divide with his employer. The parties commonly appear together with their witnesses: both insist on being in the right; they warmly maintain their point; the altercation becomes violent, and they abuse one another in the grossest terms. When they are people of fortune or distinction, the judge stops his ears, and lets them bawl away: but if they belong to the lower classes, a few thumps on the head or back from his attendants allay the warmth of the dispute. The uproar is twice as great, when the parties are of the female sex: for it is to be

observed, that women personally defend themselves. They appear before the court covered with a veil, and remain in the small separate apartment already mentioned. The judge cannot impose silence on them, but *viva voce*; he must not have recourse to corporal punishment; and what power would the voice of ten judges have over that of an enraged woman?

For want of witnesses, the Koran is brought. The judge, after respectfully kissing and raising it to his forehead, presents it to the defendant, to do the same, and receives the oath of the latter on the open book. If the defendant swears, he gains his cause, as it is not to be supposed that the allurements of worldly and perishable lucre would induce a man to incur the punishment reserved for perjury in a future life.

When the defendant is summoned on account of debt, and he is unable to pay it, the Koran enjoins that a delay be allowed him: but if he has several times availed himself of this indulgence without fulfilling his engagements, or if he has betrayed in his conduct a want of integrity, he is delivered to his creditor, who has a right to do with him what he pleases, except maiming or putting him to death. He may then sell him as well as his wife, detain him prisoner, maltreat him, and beat him publicly in the streets of the town. The bankrupt, nevertheless, is favoured: as long as it can be proved that he is living, his creditors cannot obtain of the ecclesiastical magistrates authority to sell his effects and property; so that they are obliged to apply for the interference of the civil judge, who grants them the exercise of their rights.

Quarrels and assaults in the streets are usually punished with a fine and the bastinado. Whenever any disturbance takes place, an officer of the police rushes among the combatants, striking indiscriminately the aggressors, the persons assaulted and the lookers-on, who take to their heels. Such of them as he can secure he carries before the judge, driving them along and belabouring them with his staff. On reaching the tribunal, after the unfortunate creatures have suffered this ill-treatment, the judge very coolly inquires their names and professions. The sentence is usually followed by the infliction of the bastinado as well on the complainant as on the aggressor; and they are moreover obliged to pay a fine. As the money goes into the coffers of the judge, the fine is never remitted; but it is possible to avoid the beating and final bastinado. To this end the person in custody need only say to the officer, before they reach the court: "My good friend and brother, why should you thus seek to be the death of an innocent man? I have such a sum of money in my purse; take half of it for yourself, and give the other to the judge's porter, that I may not receive punishment."

This address, accompanied with the gratuity, usually produces the innocence and the acquittal of the accused.

The slightest faults are severely punished in Persia. The venality which prevails among the judges ensures, if not the administration of justice, at least the exercise of their functions. The repression of irregularities of every kind, is a source of revenue. The drunkard caught in a tavern, and the debauchee found in the house of ill fame, purchase impunity for their transgressions: murder and robbery alone are never pardoned, and no sum can save persons guilty of these crimes from punishment. When a man has been killed, his relatives run with loud cries to the residence of the judge, and demand the blood of the murderer, for whose apprehension the magistrate issues orders. If the murderer be opulent, a negotiation is opened. The judge proposes the requisite indemnification to the complainants, setting down a handsome sum for his own trouble as mediator: but if the relatives persist in demanding the murderer, the judge delivers him into their hands with these words: "I deliver up to you, agreeably to the law, the murderer of your kinsman; pay yourselves for the blood which he has spilled; but remember that God is generous and merciful." The officers then conduct the culprit to the spot directed, and inflict on him such torments as they are directed by the relatives, unless the latter prefer glutting their rage on him themselves; but if the murderer, after enduring all their tortures and being left for dead by his executioners, should nevertheless recover, he is free both in regard to his liberty and his life, and the family of the person whom he killed has no right to persecute him any more. The rich and powerful man, who has imbrued his hand in the blood of an indigent fellow-creature, commonly expiates his guilt by a sum of money. The compromising mulct paid to the family of a murdered person, is usually rated at from fifty to one hundred *toomauns*; but if a Christian happen by any evil chance to kill a Musulman, the sum commonly exacted is two hundred *toomauns*.

Criminal justice is administered by the civil magistrates, according to the *ourf*, or common law. There is neither public prison nor executioner: the only places of confinement are dark and filthy apartments in the houses of magistrates, whose servants perform the office of executioners. There is no criminal court. The want of regular proceedings in so important a matter, seems to be an advantage to the Persians. Among them, house-breaking, assassination, and poisoning, were not long since crimes which might be said to be unknown. Murder was commonly committed either in a gust of passion or to

revenge an injury ; but there were none of those murderers by profession, of whom Europe exhibits but too many examples. The rarity of the evil has induced a neglect of the remedy : it has fared with these crimes as with those severe diseases for which medicine has no fixed rules—the operator in both is obliged to act according to circumstances.



CHAPTER V.

OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PUNISHMENTS.

It is not without feelings of pain and disgust, that we enter upon this subject, which we would gladly have entirely omitted, were it not necessary to complete the portrait of a nation. Death, the idea of destruction, presents itself to man under an aspect so alarming, that there is no occasion to present it with all the circumstances which render it still more cruel. We should imagine, it is true, on considering the number of crimes committed in countries where executions are very frequent, that it could not be accompanied with too many horrors to deter man from guilt, since reason alone is incapable of recalling him to his duty : but the most consummate villain, enduring the horrid torments of a lingering death, ceases to be viewed as such : we forget his crimes, and behold in him only a fellow-creature suffering excruciating agonies. The emotions of the heart are not to be controlled either by reason or circumstances.

The kinds of punishment are numerous in the East, and vary according to the nature of the crime, and the quality of the culprit. The bastinado is the most common. The legs of the sufferer are tied together, and raised by means of a cord fastened to a tree or stake : the soles of the feet are then beaten with a stick. The rule is to give at least thirty strokes, but never more than three hundred. When a person is convicted of perjury, his throat is crammed with tow or rags, and melted lead poured into his mouth. Swindlers are branded on the forehead with a red-hot iron ; house-breakers and coiners of counterfeit money have a hand cut off. Tradesmen using false weights, are put into a kind of walking pillory. A thick plank, with a hole in the middle to admit the head, rests upon the shoulders of the culprit ; to this plank is fastened a bell : a straw cap is placed on his head, and thus accoutred he is paraded through the streets of the town.

The most common capital punishment, called *shekeh kerdan*, consists in cutting the body in two lengthwise with a sword, beginning between the legs and terminating on the side of the

neck above the shoulder. For this purpose, the criminal is fastened by the heels to a pack-saddle on the back of a camel, with his head hanging nearly to the ground. After the horrid sentence has been executed, the camel with the bisected body is led through the whole town, preceded by an officer who proclaims the nature of the crime. The remains of the culprit are then hung to a pole or a tree, either in the country or in the suburbs, or even in the *meidan*, or open place before the palace.

Mr. Morier relates, that during the residence of the embassy which he accompanied at Shiraz, the report of a gun was one day heard, and on inquiry it was found to be the execution of a thief, who had been blown from the mouth of a mortar. Three men had been condemned to death by the prince-governor, for robbery: one was beheaded; the second blown up; and the third was cut in half, and the two parts of his body hung over two of the most frequented gates of the city, as a warning to other thieves. This horrid spectacle was displayed for three days.

Another cruel punishment reserved for robbers, who, since the accession of Feth Ali Shah, have been treated with peculiar severity, is the following:—The tops of two young trees are pulled down by means of a rope; one of the legs of the criminal is fastened to each of them, and the ropes are suddenly loosed: the force with which the trees return to their original erect position, tears the body of the unfortunate wretch in two. Impaling, cutting off the hands and legs, and immuring between four walls, were punishments usual in Persia in Chardin's time.

The death inflicted on grandees who have incurred the anger of the king, varies according to his pleasure. The most common is beheading: but if the fault be attended with aggravating circumstances, ingenious cruelty easily finds out refinements of suffering. A French gentleman relates, that during his residence in the camp of Feth Ali Shah, he witnessed the punishment inflicted on one of the king's officers, who had been convicted of peculation. His majesty caused the culprit's hands to be nailed together in his presence, over his breast, and two hundred strokes with a stick to be administered on his back. This punishment, nevertheless, was not considered as ignominious; and it was generally asserted, that this officer would appear again at court, as soon as he should be well enough.

When the reigning Shah aspired to the throne, the nation was divided into several parties, whose leaders were actuated by the same ambition of reigning. Saduk Khan Chegaughee, the richest and most powerful of them, was alone able to make any long resistance. Having been at length discomfited in a battle near Casvin, he was persuaded to surrender to the king, provided his blood should not be spilt. The king gave his solemn

promise to this effect, and kept it : for he caused him to be brick-ed up alive in one of the small rooms of a house at Teheran, in which he miserably perished of hunger, after having nearly eaten his own hands. The house in which this horrid scene occurred, was one of those assigned to the British embassy under Sir Gore Ouseley.

During the residence of this embassy in Persia, Mohamed Zemaun Khan, governor of Asterabad, having allied himself with the Turcomans, threw off his allegiance to the king ; but was seized and delivered up to the monarch by his own people, who dreaded the resentment of the latter. The king, on his arrival, ordered the chief of his camel-artillery to put a mock crown on the rebel's head, *bazubends*, or armlets on his arms, a sword by his side ; to mount him upon an ass with his face towards the tail, and the tail in his hand ; then to parade him throughout the camp, and to exclaim : " This is he who wanted to be king ! " After this was over and the people had mocked and insulted him, he was led before the king, who called for the *looties*, or buffoons, and ordered them to turn him into ridicule, by forcing him to dance and make antics against his will. He then ordered that whoever chose might spit in his face. He then received the bastinado on the soles of his feet, and some time afterwards had his eyes put out.

As to females, they frequently owe the preservation of their lives to the notion entertained by the Persians that their blood produces ill-luck. This notion has probably given rise to the punishment reserved for them, which consists in muffling them up closely in their veils, and precipitating them from the top of a tower.

PART III.

RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGION OF THE PERSIANS—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR CREED AND THAT OF THE TURKS.

THE followers of Mahomet, when they subdued Persia during the caliphate of Omar, introduced into that country the religion of their prophet, which has predominated there ever since.

The whole of the Mahometan religion may be reduced to seven points, two of which relate to faith, the other to ceremonies: 1. To profess that there is but one only God; 2. that Mahomet is his apostle; 3. to observe corporeal purifications; 4. to recite the stated prayer; 5. to give alms; 6. to fast during the month of Ramazan; 7. to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. To these fundamental points of Islamism the Persians add another, which they place next to the second, and which consists in confessing that Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, is the lieutenant of God. This article of faith, which is rejected with horror by the Turks, occasioned the grand schism which divides the Musulmans; the partisans of Ali being called by the *Sunnites*, or orthodox believers, *Shias*, or *Shiites*, that is, heretics.

The hatred of the Sunnites and Shiites increased in the sequel. Under the caliphs of the dynasty of the Abbassides, it frequently degenerated into fury; and it was considered a meritorious action in a man, to kill another of a contrary opinion to his own. The Shiites found warm protectors among the Abbassides, whose zeal, however, only paved the way to fresh scenes of carnage. How often have the streets of Bagdad, *the city of peace*, the Rome of the Mahometan world, been drenched with the blood and strewed with the carcasses of its inhabitants!

The sect of the Shiites made great progress in Persia. The provinces bordering on the Caspian Sea, and the mountains which separate them from the centre of the kingdom, afforded an asylum to the descendants of Ali. The Bouides were Shiites, and Adhad-ad-daulah, the greatest prince of that house, even caused splendid tombs to be erected in honour of Ali and his son Hossein. The destruction of the caliphate of Bagdad by Holagou, put an end to the religious dissensions, or at least to the fanaticism which kept them up: a million of inhabitants

perished by the hand of that Tartar. Among his successors, however, there were some who adopted the doctrine of the Shiites: such were Gazan Khan, and his brother, Mohammed-Koda-bendeh, though the latter, indeed, afterwards recanted. At length Ismail Ardebili, founder of the house of the Sofis, embraced it; he spread it with his victories, and in his zeal, laid sacrilegious hands on the tombs of the Sunnites, destroyed their mosques, and cruelly persecuted such of his subjects as rejected his doctrine. Selim I. who then occupied the throne of Turkey, availed himself of the pretext of religion, to declare war against Ismail: and in the letter which he addressed to the Persian monarch, previously to this declaration, he gives a curious exposition of the motives of piety and zeal by which he professed to be influenced. Ismail was vanquished in the battle of Tchaldiran, but nevertheless continued his efforts for the propagation of the tenets of the Shiites, which the majority of the Persians have ever since his reign espoused. This difference of creed has laid the foundation of that antipathy which prevails between them and the Turks. Their wars are religious wars, of which politics are never the apparent motive.

When Nadir Shah had contrived that the crown should be offered to him, he accepted it only on condition that the Shiites should in future abstain from anathematizing the first three caliphs, and holding festivals in honour of Ali and Hossein. It must have been a singular spectacle, though not unparalleled in history, to see that ferocious conqueror assembling the doctors, entering into theological discussions, and arguing like a casuist. Toleration appeared to be his virtue: he exhorted the Persians to return to more moderate opinions, to adopt merely the explanation of the Koran by the Imam Djafar-el-Sadik, one of Ali's descendants, and to assume the name of Djafari. These indications of extraordinary moderation were at first persuasive; but the persecution by which they were followed, displayed Nadir's character in its true light: it was not, as may easily be conceived, either philanthropy or piety that had actuated this barbarian. His object was to conciliate by this conduct, the Arabs, the Courds and the Turcomans, who composed the greater part of his army, and who were Sunnites. It was probably his intention also, to pave the way to the more easy conquest of Turkey, by removing the cause of religious animosity. These designs he thwarted by the impolicy of his own conduct: he imagined that a new point of faith may be established by force of arms, and that it is not more difficult to rule consciences than to govern men. He increased the hatred of his subjects, shook his power, and perished without obtaining the least success. Had he been

better informed, the history of past ages would have taught him that a religion never shines with brighter lustre than when it is furiously attacked, and that periods of persecution furnish occasions for its proudest triumphs.

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINES.

SECTION I.

OF GOD, THE RESURRECTION AND A FUTURE STATE.

THE Persians are the most decided deists in the world. They not only profess the unity of God, but they insist also on a singleness of person in his essence, and charge the Christians with blasphemy in adoring a deity composed of three persons. All their divines agree upon this point, as well as on the omniscience and omnipotence of the divinity: they differ only in this particular, that some consider these qualities as attributes, while others hold them to be part of the essence of God.

They believe in the resurrection, the last judgment, and a future state. As soon as the body is deposited in the tomb, the two angels of death, Monkyr and Nekyr, appear and question the deceased respecting his religion, faith, and works. His answers are inscribed in a great book, which will be delivered in at the day of judgment. After this examination, the souls of the good proceed to Barzak, and those of the wicked to the valley of Bairouth: there they abide till the general resurrection, neither enjoying nor suffering, but by anticipation of their eternal happiness or misery. An intermediate place between paradise and hell, receives for eternity the spirits of those who have not done either good or evil.

On the day of resurrection, the souls will appear together with the bodies which formerly belonged to them: they will assemble in a vast plain near Mecca. The judgment will take place by means of a pair of scales, each of which will be as large as the superficies of the heavens. In one, called the *basin of light*, will be placed the book of good actions; in the other, or the *basin of darkness*, the book of bad actions. After this examination, the spirits will cross the famous bridge, *Poulsirath*, laid over hell, on which the separation will take place. The good will traverse it with the rapidity of lightning which

flashes and disappears, but the wicked will be tumbled from it into the infernal regions.

The Persians admit seven degrees of felicity and torment, but differ respecting their nature. Some doctors assert that the soul of the good will revel in purely spiritual joys, such as the sense of its qualities, the knowledge of all the sciences, &c.: while others represent paradise as the theatre of the most refined pleasures of sense, peopling it with *houris*, or celestial females, to whose beauty the imagination which creates them can alone do justice. According to the former, the pains of hell will consist of mental torments, and, according to the latter, of bodily sufferings. In this future state, the women will live apart from men, but in the arms of youthful Ganymedes they will enjoy delights of which this nether world affords no image.

In adopting the Koran, the Persians have acknowledged the divine mission and the prophetic character of its author. According to them, there have been 280,000 prophets since the creation of the world. Adam was the first of them, and Mahomet the last. All the epithets attached by the Musulmans to the name of that impostor, would fill a volume. One of the most extraordinary, is that of ignorant: they repeat it with enthusiasm, proclaim it with emphasis, and find in this ignorance a manifest proof of the divine nature of his mission; upon the ground that the less learning a prophet possesses, the more manifest it is that the doctrine he preaches must be from heaven.

SECTION II.

OF ALI—OF THE TITLE OF IMAM—OF MEHDI.

We have seen that it is an article of the Persian confession of faith, that Ali was the lieutenant of God: in an axiom which is very common with them, they demonstrate the respect which they pay him. Mahomet, say they, is a city of knowledge, and Ali is the gate to it. Setting no bounds to their veneration or their fanaticism, they exalt him above human nature, attribute miracles to him, and almost deify him: nay, there is a sect, whose members inhabit the countries contiguous to the sources of the Djihoun and the Sind, to the north of Kandahar, who regard him as God, though they admit the divine character of the Koran, and follow its precepts. It is chiefly among the lowest class of the people, that these exaggerated notions are current: this caliph's name always figures in their oaths, and instead of commending themselves to the divine protection, they invoke that of Ali. The superior orders, however, make a great dif-

ference between Mahomet, the apostle of God, and Ali, the son-in-law of that apostle: and though they regard Ali as his legitimate successor, they are far from making him his equal.

Not only do the Persians maintain the justice of Ali's rights to the crown to the exclusion of the first three caliphs, rights which he derived from Mahomet himself, but they admit no legitimate princes excepting his descendants. These princes are twelve in number. Ali is the first, and Mehdi the last. They bear the title of *Imam*, that is, spiritual and temporal guide or chief. From the nobleness of their origin may be inferred the qualities with which they are endowed. Supernatural knowledge, perfect sanctity, and the power to perform miracles, are some of the most remarkable of their attributes.

The twelfth Imam was but five years old when he succeeded to the Imamatus; and he disappeared at the age of twelve years. Opinions are divided respecting him. The Sunnites consider him as destined to appear again towards the end of time, to call all the nations of the earth to the knowledge of Islamism; adding, that three hundred and sixty celestial spirits will assist him in this mission, and that he will be the vicar of Jesus Christ, in the august office of the Imamatus. The Shiites, on the other hand, believe, that he still dwells in this world, living unknown by men in a sequestered cave: his return is the object of their wishes and expectations, for he is to re-assert the rights of his house, to establish a universal caliphate over the whole surface of the earth, and to bring all mankind to the true faith, as is denoted by the surname of Mehdi, or director, which he bears. His proper name is Mohammed. This opinion has favoured the ambition of a multitude of impostors, who have given themselves out for this Imam, and who, by the assumption of so sacred a character, have collected numerous partisans. What blood has it again cost humanity to establish and overthrow their power!



CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.



SECTION I.

PURIFICATIONS.

PURIFICATIONS form one of the most essential practices of the Mahometan religion. "The body appears before God as well as the soul; it must therefore be cleansed from all stain, previously to the performance of any religious act." Such is the

principle on which purifications are enjoined. But bigotry has so increased the number of objects which make a person unclean, and carried its scruples relative to legal purity to such a length, that the half of life might be occupied with purifications.

"Religion," says Mahomet, "is founded on cleanliness of the body." No pretext, not even the want of water, can excuse the Musulman from the duty of purifying himself before he says his prayers. For want of running water he will use such as is stagnant and muddy, earth, or even camel's dung. Hence it may easily be supposed, that a Persian is frequently more dirty after than before his purifications. Thus all institutions, how useful soever originally, in process of time become corrupted. Moses, in making purifications a religious duty, designed to prevent those diseases which are engendered by neglect of cleanliness, especially in a hot climate where perspiration is profuse. Mahomet adopted this principle, and for the same purpose. Such was the cause of this institution, but what is its effect? If personal cleanliness be the emblem of internal purity, it must be confessed that the Persians have very filthy souls indeed.

There are three kinds of purifications: the *gasl*, the *ab-dest* or *vouzou*, and the *gousl*. The first is washing for all the material impurities that may happen to be on the body of a Musulman, on his garments, or in his oratory. It is to preserve himself from such impurities that the Musulman, though he takes the greatest care of animals, and uses them well, will constantly drive them from his person or apartment. He will abstain for the same reason from wearing robes that reach the ground, lest they should touch any thing impure; he will wear double coverings for the feet, the outermost of which he leaves at the door of apartments; and he will never go abroad or undertake a journey without his *sedjadeh*, or carpet, on which he says his prayers.

The *ab-dest*, or ablution, is required whenever the believer has defiled himself by drinking wine and on other occasions; it must precede the five canonical prayers. This ablution consists in washing the face, hands, and arms as high as the elbows, and the feet up to the ankle. The frequent recurrence of this practice has occasioned the necessity for the great number of fountains that are met with in the East, by the road-side, in the caravanserais, and in private houses. All the mosques have basins deeper than the height of a man, destined for purifications, and which may be compared to the brazen laver in Solomon's temple at Jerusalem.

The *gousl*, or general lotion, extends to the whole body. It is repeated twice or thrice a week in private or public baths, and it is strictly practised among all Mahometan nations.

SECTION II.

PRAYERS.

Mahomet, having received from God the principles of his new religion, promised in behalf of himself and his followers to say prayers fifty times in the course of each day: the lukewarmness of men, however, soon obliged him to reduce the number to thirty. But the occupations of civil and military life were incessantly interrupted by these devotions; and the enemy availed themselves of the fervour of the piety of the Musulmans to destroy their works. Mahomet, therefore, entered into a second negotiation with God, and the number of prayers was reduced to five.

The first of these five prayers is said at noon, at which hour the civil day of the Musulmans commences; the second, when half the sun's disk is below the horizon; the third, when it is so dark that a white thread cannot be distinguished from a black one; the fourth, at bed-time; the fifth, between the moment when the stars disappear and noon. As, however, the precept was somewhat obscure, these prayers have been reduced to three, those for noon and evening, and those for bed-time and night, being said together; and great latitude is taken in regard to the time for prayer, by advancing it four hours, or deferring it for the same space.

Nothing can prevent the Persian from performing these devotions: he allows no human respect to stand in his way; on the contrary, the demonstrations of his piety assume a character of greater or less fervour, according to the notice taken of them by strangers. A Persian belonging to the suite of Asker-Khan, ambassador from Feth Ali Shah to the court of France, who affected an appearance of piety, was frequently seen spreading his carpet in the midst of an apartment, where company was assembled, muttering his prayers, and making the same religious gestures as if he was alone. The annexed engraving represents a Persian performing these devotions.

These devotions furnish the Persians with a polite excuse, of which they rarely fail to avail themselves, to get rid of any person whose society or conversation is disagreeable to them. They will spring up all at once, and abruptly quit the room. "It is high time for me to say my prayers," is the only apology they make for their rudeness.

We have seen that bodily purity is one of the external qualities required for the due performance of religious devotions: there is another, namely, gesture. The Musulman is

obliged to turn towards Mecca, to make certain motions with his arms and hands, and to prostrate himself according to specific rules. After stripping to his shirt, the sleeves of which he tucks up above the elbows, he puts on his head a turban of linen cloth without gold, silver, or embroidery, and performs his ablutions. This done, he puts on his stockings, turns down his sleeves, throws on his robe, spreads his carpet, and squats on a corner of it in the eastern fashion, and after combing his beard, takes up his rosary and begins his prayers. He generally places on the floor, at a little distance before him, a plate of metal, on which are engraved the name of God, those of the prophet and the Imams, the profession of faith and texts of the Koran: the use of it is to receive the forehead, in the prostrations which accompany the prayers.

A Persian is rarely without a string of beads in his hand: this he carries not so much out of a spirit of religion, as for a guide in the ordinary concerns of life. When, for example, he thinks of going to some place, making a bargain, or performing any action whatever, he lays hold of a handfull of beads at random, and from their number he decides whether he shall do what he intended or not.

As there are no clocks in Persia, the time for each prayer is announced by the *muezzins*, or cryers, stationed for the purpose in the minarets of the mosques. To augment the power of their voices, they pull their mouths with their little fingers, placing their thumbs in their ears, and sing out with all their might, so that they may sometimes be heard at the distance of twelve or fifteen hundred paces. On hearing the well-known sound, every one says his prayers either at the mosque, or at his own house; for the Persians rarely visit their temples, as their religion allows them to perform at their own homes the duties which it imposes.

We shall conclude this section with a trait which evinces the subtlety of the Persian divines. Their religion forbids them to pray in a room containing any painting of the human countenance. To evade this injunction, the face is represented with one eye only: thus mutilated, it is no longer an image, say these doctors, but a grotesque figure which is not forbidden by their law.

SECTION III.

ALMS AND FASTS.

The Koran, in several places, commands the giving of alms. Every Musulman who has acquired wealth, generally devotes part of it to the foundation of establishments of public utility, and that independently of the tithe required by religion to be

given in charity, if he would ensure to himself a quick passage over the Pouli-sirath, on the day of judgment. Ostentation, indeed, is more frequently his motive than piety; but be the cause what it may, the effect is beneficial.

Charity may be said to be the pre-eminent virtue of Mahometan nations: there is not a moralist, not a poet, but recommends the practice of it, and sounds its praises. "Be ye like the trees laden with fruit and planted by the road-side," says Djami: "they give shade and fruit to all, even to those who pelt them with stones."

Most of the caravanserais of Persia, as well as the bridges, cisterns, mosques, colleges, and baths, are pious foundations.

Fasting is no less an obligation than purifications and prayer: it is termed by the doctors, the gate of religion. The fast of Ramazan alone is of divine command; the others are of human institution. It consists in abstaining from every kind of food from day-break till night, from all sin, and from temporal concerns, and the cares of life, during the thirty days contained in that month: hence a perfect dervise is described to be a man living in this world in a perpetual Ramazan.

This month is the ninth in the year of the Persians, which is lunar: thus it runs through the different seasons, and falls in winter as well as in summer. When the moon of Ramazan appears, the *muezzins* announce it with a loud voice from the tops of the mosques, strike up hymns, and publish the commencement of the fast as the most welcome intelligence. The people reply to this intimation with shouts of joy, and in an instant all the shops are illuminated. At the same time, the trumpets sound at the doors of all the baths, to give notice that they are open; for this fast, like all other religious ceremonies, must begin with purification. Its conclusion is celebrated with greater solemnity than the commencement. The acclamations of the people, the sound of instruments, and all sorts of festivities, declare that a season of joy has succeeded a period of privation. These diversions are sometimes continued five or six days.

The fast of Ramazan must be extremely distressing in summer, when the days are long. Let the Catholic who murmurs against lent, which merely enjoins abstinence from certain articles of food, consider the Persian summoned betimes to his daily avocations, overpowered with heat, fatigue and hunger, taking as it were by stealth a few drops of water to quench his thirst, abstaining even from smoking, and waiting till the tardy departure of the sun shall allow him to break a fast of nearly seventeen hours!

In Persia, however, as in all other countries, there are persons ingenious enough to evade these disagreeable precepts, or to

soften their rigour. Some will sleep all day, during the *Ramazan*, and pass the night in excesses of every kind; and such people, nevertheless, think that they are duly observing the fast.

SECTION IV.

PILGRIMAGE.

The only pilgrimage enjoined by the Mahometan religion, is to the *kaabah*, or temple of Mecca, the object of the veneration of all true Musulmans. The Persians, however, are far from strict in their observance of this precept. They think, and justly too, that this act of piety cannot well be performed but by those who are in good health, and whose circumstances will allow them to take such a journey without injury to their families. Many, however, acquit themselves of this duty by substitute. You meet in Persia with numbers of Arabs, who sell the title of pilgrim which they have acquired, or who travel to Mecca instead of another for a certain sum of money. To prevent fraud, their employers require them to bring back the certificate which the sherif of Mecca delivers to pilgrims.

The Musulman who has visited the sacred city, bears for the rest of his life the honourable title of *hadjee*, or pilgrim. On his return from Mecca, he usually passes through Jerusalem and Hebron, which he also considers as sacred places, on account of his veneration for Abraham; and in his way back to Persia, he traverses the Arabian Irak, where he pays his devotions at the tomb of Ali and his son Hossein.



CHAPTER IV.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS.

THE Persians have a great number of religious festivals in celebration of the birth and death of their prophets and saints, the principal mysteries of their faith, and the most memorable events of their religion. None of them is obligatory; their observance is purely optional, and some of them are not even distinguished by any ceremony. It would be too long to enumerate all these festivals; we shall therefore confine our notice to a few of them.

We have seen that the conclusion of the *Ramazan* furnishes occasion for a religious festival, kept with the greater enthusiasm and piety because it terminates the strictest fast. The *Aid-el-corban*, or festival of the sacrifice, is also attended with great rejoicings: it has been instituted in commemoration of

Abraham, who, out of obedience to the Almighty, would have sacrificed his son Ishmael, whom the Arabs regard as their progenitor, and whom they substitute in this instance for Isaac. Some days before the *corban*, every family buys a sheep without spot or defect, an emblem of the corporeal and spiritual purity of Ishmael. On the day of the festival, this victim is decorated with ribbons, pearls and ornaments of every kind; its forehead, feet, and other parts of the body, are stained with *henna*, a powder made of the leaves of the *cyperus*; after being thus adorned and paraded about, it is slaughtered, and pieces of the flesh are sent by the family to its friends and the poor.

In large cities, instead of a sheep, the governor slaughters a camel; and the ceremony is performed out of the town, on a spot appropriated to the purpose. The governor inflicts the first blow; on which the bystanders instantly fall upon the victim, and cut it in pieces; and happy are they who can secure one of them for their share, because it is a pledge of good luck. On the return of the people from the sacrifice, scaffolds are erected before the governor's palace, in the public places, and in the streets; and rope-dancers, wrestlers, musicians, singers, and dancers, amuse the multitude there during the rest of the day.

On the 21st of Ramazan, a solemn festival is held in honour of Ali. For this purpose, a covered gallery is constructed somewhere out of the town, where the chief men of the place take their station. In front of this gallery is a kind of pulpit, eight feet high, covered with cloth. Here the preacher appointed to pronounce the panegyric of the sacred personage, reads for an hour or two in a book intituled *Moctel-nameh*, book of the murder, containing a history of the death of Ali, chanting without intermission, in a loud, clear, and doleful voice. There are certain passages of which he pronounces only the first word, leaving some of the congregation to finish. At the end of each passage, they repeat this imprecation: "*May the curse of God be upon the murderer of Ali!*" and all the people respond: "*Rather more than less.*" It is rarely that the assembly is not melted into tears, when the preacher draws the affecting picture of Ali, apprizing his children that he shall soon fall by the hand of one of his servants, and receiving the fatal blow in the mosque while engaged in prayer. After the sermon, the people return in procession to the town; three camels bear representations of the tombs of Ali, and his two sons, Hassan and Hosien. These are followed by three chests covered with blue cloth, containing the spiritual treatises which they wrote; horses, carrying bows, turbans, and flags; and men, bearing on their heads little boxes covered with feathers and flowers, and con-

taining the Koran. The procession is closed by musicians and young men, performing a variety of dances.

The first ten days of the month of Moharrem are devoted to a solemn mourning, in memory of the death of Hossein, the son of Ali. During this period, the Persians dress themselves in mourning, affect all the external appearances of sorrow, abstain from shaving their heads, from bathing, and even from changing their clothes. On the eve of the first of Moharrem, the mosques are hung with black. The next day, the pulpits are dressed in the same manner, the *akhond* and *pish-namaz*, inferior ministers of religion, ascend them, and narrate the particulars of the murder of Hossein with all the inflections of voice that are calculated to render them more pathetic. The congregation from time to time beat their breasts, ejaculating: *Ya Hossein! Ez Hossein heif!* "O Hossein! Alas, Hossein!" Parts of the history of this Imam are in verse, and are chanted to a doleful tune. Various episodes of this history are daily represented by itinerant minstrels, as the circumstances of the passion of Christ are exhibited in the Catholic countries of Europe. Banners, to which are fastened pictures relating to this history, are carried about the streets, followed by a concourse of men and boys, some personating Hossein's soldiers, and others his enemies. The two parties sometimes come to blows, and these sham-fights terminate in the death of one or two of the combatants.

The representation of the marriage of young Cassem, Hassan's son, with the daughter of his uncle, Hossein, forms one of the amusing incidents of this funeral festival. A young man acts the part of the bride, who is attired in a rich wedding-dress, and accompanied by her relatives, who sing a mournful elegy on the death of the bridegroom; for it should be observed, that the Imam Cassem was slain before the consummation of the marriage. At parting from his bride to go to the fight, Cassem takes the most affecting farewell of her; and, with a presentiment of his fate, he gives her, in token of his love, a mourning robe which she puts on. At this moment the people, transported with rage, rush upon the effigy of the caliph Yezid, the murderer of the Ali family, and tear it in pieces.

It is impossible to give an adequate description of the fanatic phrenzy of the Persians, during the days of mourning; nay, it could scarcely be credited, did not history teach us that the human mind knows no bounds in its aberrations. Death then appears a blessing of heaven; and those who perish in the combats which take place, are accounted martyrs. On the last day of the festival, their bodies are deposited in sepulchres, which are profusely decorated, and carried with great pomp to the

cemetery. Many Persians even inflict voluntary wounds on themselves, in commemoration of the sufferings of the Imams, and in expiation of their own sins.

On the 28th of Jefer, the death of the Imam Hassan, brother of Hossein, is celebrated, but with less pomp, though with the same ceremonies.

Mr. Scott Waring mentions a festival celebrated by the Persians for the death of the caliph Omar. They erect a large platform, on which they fix an image, disfigured and deformed as much as possible. Addressing themselves to the image, they begin to revile it for having supplanted Ali, the lawful successor of the Prophet: at length, having exhausted all their expressions of abuse, they suddenly attack the image with stones and sticks, till they have shattered it into pieces. The inside is hollow and full of sweetmeats, which are greedily devoured by the mob who attend the ceremony.

We shall say nothing of the festivals instituted in commemoration of some of Mahomet's miracles, such as the cleaving of the moon, the parturition of the stone, the speaking camel, &c. The reader who is not intimately acquainted with the history of that impostor, may not be aware that one of the chief miracles attributed to him is that of cleaving the moon in two. The parturition of the stone is not less surprising. A poor man, having lost a camel, which was all that he possessed, was overwhelmed with grief. Mahomet, moved with compassion, struck a stone; a camel instantly sprang from it, and he gave the animal to the poor fellow. The story of the camel seems to be an allegory, in which the Arab is exhorted to have compassion on that useful animal when it is grown old. A wealthy merchant of Medina kept several camels for his commercial pursuits, and when age and hard work had reduced their strength, he turned them out to shift for themselves. A camel which had experienced this treatment, went to Mahomet and complained to him of the injustice and cruelty of his master. Mahomet sent for the merchant, reprimanded him for his conduct, and commanded him in future to keep every camel worn out in his service till its death.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE SOFIS.

THE Sofis, the origin of whose very name is veiled in obscurity, are a species of philosophers not less fanatical than the Dervises, with whom they are frequently confounded. Their doctrine and practices are covered with profound mystery. A Sofi, according to the idea to be formed of him from the works of the Persian poets, is a pious man, living in seclusion from the world, whose morality is pure; whose doctrine is mild and tolerant; whose soul is plunged into the depths of mysticism; who spiritualizes all the ceremonies of religion, and constantly keeps a vigilant eye over himself. Universal indifference, the extinction of every worldly wish and desire, the presumptuous hope of an imaginary perfection, constitute the essence of his contemplative life. It was in this acceptation of the term, that Saadi, Senaï, Hafiz, Djelal-eddin, and Djami, aspired to the rank of Sofis: but mysticism approaches too near to the illusions of fanaticism for the mind to pause at any middle point, and when the imagination has once passed that point, it sets no bounds to its extravagance. Thus there arose in Persia a particular sect of Sofis, which were called impious, and who derive no other fruit from their crude meditations than the belief that there is no God. They gleaned from the Mahometan religion, the relics of the Grecian philosophy, and the reveries of the Indian Gymnosophists, materials for an insensate doctrine, which rather encouraged than checked the passions. The Sofis have a book called *Gulshen-raz*, the mysterious garden, containing their opinions on theology, philosophy, and morals. As secrecy is the first precept of their order, it is difficult to ascertain its principles. It is said, however, that their doctrine is founded on that of Pythagoras; that they acknowledge one only essence, and believe in the transmigration of souls. They repeat among themselves this distich, which they style the mystery of the Sofis:

“There is one only essence, but there are a thousand forms or figures;

“And how numerous soever these forms may be, they are not worthy of engaging our attention.”

There is a striking resemblance between this distich and the following passage of the Baghavat of India:—“He who considers all the different species of beings as forming but a single essence diversified to infinity, that man knows Brahma.” It would not be difficult to prove, that these sects of Persian Sofis derived most of their doctrines and practices from India.

The devout Mahometans charge the Sofis with atheism ; while the latter not only deny the accusation, but pretend to hold intercourse with God : they assemble at night, and perform the exercises of turning round, jumping and shouting, till they drop down from weakness and exhaustion. Owing to these practices, they are obnoxious to the Persians, and the appellation of Sofi, sought some centuries ago by persons of the greatest sanctity, is now a term of reproach.

The sentiments of the reigning monarch respecting these fanatics, cannot be more clearly demonstrated, than in the translation of a letter addressed by him to one of his governors, enjoining him to punish two Sofis who had endeavoured to excite sedition and to defy the supreme authority :—

“ Whereas for some time Sofis have spread their opinion in a truly alarming manner, and gained a great number of credulous and silly proselytes, who blindly adopt the faith and the habit of those preachers : as nothing can be more hostile to the interests of the true religion ; as the subject has been deemed worthy of the attention of our wisest counsellors, and you have yourselves addressed to us your observations upon it ; we have deemed it advisable to take this matter into consideration, and to write to our governors and officers to punish these Sofis, unless they amend their conduct, to take from them what they have craftily obtained from the credulous and people of weak minds ; and in case the owners of these things cannot be discovered, to distribute them among the poor. We have lastly ordered this sect to be extirpated and destroyed, that the true faith may flourish. Aga Mehdy and Mirza Mehdy have misled the people in the neighbourhood of Hamadan, where they were regarded as holy doctors ; they have been sent prisoners into our presence. We now deliver them into your hands, considering you as the most learned, the wisest, and the most virtuous of the doctors of this kingdom. Put them to death, imprison them, or punish them in any manner most agreeable to the laws of our holy religion.” The two Sofis were executed.



CHAPTER VI.

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

THE Persians, unlike the other professors of the Mahometan faith, manifest a spirit of toleration towards those whom they regard as infidels, worthy of the imitation of many a Christian community. To show how this spirit is encouraged by the

present government, either from a principle of justice or from political motives, we shall adduce a circumstance that happened some years since in the province of Adherbijan, under the administration of Abbas Mirza, heir-apparent to the throne.

One day, in the month of January 1807, a Persian belonging to the household of the prince-royal thought fit to insult publicly an Armenian merchant of the city of Tabreez, and to abuse him in the grossest manner, for no other reason than the difference of their religions, the Armenian being a Christian. The latter hoped at first to silence his aggressor, by addressing to him some pretty sharp reproofs: but a zealous Musulman, acknowledging no other legitimate right than that of his own strength, despises the eternal principles of justice. With defiance on his brow, and blasphemy upon his lips, it is his delight to insult the weak and to calumniate the Christian religion, when he can do it with impunity. Not content, therefore, with personally affronting the Christian merchant in an outrageous manner, this Persian servant launched out into the most atrocious language against Christ, his gospel, the sign of the cross, and other emblems of our religion. These blasphemies roused the indignation of the Armenian to such a degree, that, to punish the aggressor and to avenge his religion before the public, he laid hands on him, and after giving him a sound beating, left him extended on the ground, and quickly returned to his own house.

The man, covered with dirt and blood, presently got up and went straightway to the palace of the prince his master, to prefer his complaint against the Armenian merchant, by whom he had been so roughly handled. He took good care to conceal from the prince the real cause of their quarrel, and interlarded his story with many false allegations against the merchant. Abbas had too much penetration not to perceive the means by which his servant hoped to strengthen his complaint; he nevertheless listened with patience to his whole deposition, which embraced a variety of circumstantial details that had all the appearance of truth, but in reality were nothing but fictions. He then summoned before him the Armenian merchant, and determined to examine him in full divan, and hear what he had to say in his defence. At the same time, he ordered the persons who had witnessed the fray to attend. After hearing their declarations and evidence, the divan was convinced that the servant had without provocation attacked the Armenian, and uttered blasphemies against the Christian religion, and that for these causes only the merchant had beaten the Persian. After this unanimous decision of the divan, the prince commanded the Christian and the Musulman to be confined in separate prisons.

With a view to prevent similar offences in future, to give satis-

faction, as it were, to the Christians resident in the country, and to administer justice with the sanction of those who are the guardians of the laws of Mahometan states, Abbas convened a divan composed of the Sheik-ul-Islam, and the principal ulemas of the city of Tabreez, and proposed the following questions, which he required them to answer in succession, according to their custom :—

Question. Was the Lord Jesus (Hazreti-Iysa) a real prophet sent by God?—*Answer.* Yes.

Question. Are the laws contained in his noble gospel (Indjilisheryf) just or not?—*Answer.* Yes, they are just.

Question. Is it permitted by our laws to blaspheme the Lord Jesus and his noble gospel?—*Answer.* No, it is unjust.

Upon these unanimous decisions of the ulemas, called in such cases, *fetva*, (sentence) the prince-royal ordered the merchant to be set at liberty, and his servant to be punished with one hundred strokes of the bastinado; and he dismissed him from his service, as a warning to all who should be disposed to insult the professors of a different religion from their own.

Similar sentiments were displayed by the monarch himself, on a more recent occasion :—In April 1815, the vicinity of the capital was visited with an extraordinary drought. The Sheik-ul-Islam of that city, who was held in high consideration by the king and the court, but who was not acquainted with the good intentions of the sovereign towards all his subjects without distinction, imagined that he was performing an action well pleasing to God and his majesty, in collecting in his house two hundred of the populace, and persuading them that the drought and the consequent dearth of the productions of the soil, were a punishment inflicted by the Almighty, because people frequented the taverns kept by the Armenians; adding that to appease the divine wrath, they ought to destroy those haunts of impiety. By such language, the Sheik-ul-Islam inflamed the minds of his hearers, who tumultuously proceeded to the quarter inhabited by the Armenians, and in the presence of the Sheik, demolished one of their churches, and pulled down the houses of several dealers in wine.

It was not long before the king was informed of this outrage. He ordered the Sheik-ul-Islam, and the persons whom he had instigated to its commission, to be immediately apprehended and brought before him. Being apprized of his majesty's indignation, they had concealed themselves in different parts of the city; and the Sheik-ul-Islam, who had most to fear from the king's displeasure, sought refuge in the mosque of Shah Abdul Azym, a few miles from Teheran, which is an inviolable sanctuary for

criminals, and even for murderers. The mosques in which the Imams or their children are interred, enjoy the same privilege.

The royal guards, however, discovered and secured twelve of these people, who were carried before the king. He was surrounded by all his ministers. "Audacious wretches!" said he, "who commanded you to act thus? What law authorizes such proceedings? Is the Sheik-ul-Islam your sovereign, or the ruler of this country? Ye have violated the laws of my dominions; by them I condemn you: depart from my presence." The legal penalties were immediately enforced, and the culprits were obliged to pay the Armenians an indemnification of one thousand *toomauns*. His majesty then sent for the principal persons of the Armenian nation. "It is my wish," said he to them, "that all my subjects, of what religion soever they be, should enjoy a just liberty, and live unmolested under the protection of my royal authority." He then promised to inflict condign punishment on the Sheik-ul-Islam, and exhorted them to pray to God for the preservation of his life. At the same time, Feth Ali Shah ordered his treasurer to pay to these notables the sum of three thousand *toomauns* out of his privy purse, as a compensation to the Christians for the injury they had sustained. He moreover commanded that the Armenian church should be repaired at the expense of government, and that restitution should be made for such furniture and effects as had been damaged or destroyed.

If the preceding facts exhibit a laudable relaxation of Mahometan rigour towards those whom they regard as infidels, the following whimsical anecdote proves the Persians to be the least fanatic of all Musulmans, in permitting doubts to be publicly raised among themselves against points of faith inculcated by their own religion.

A *mollah*, preaching one day in a mosque, strongly insisted on the examination which the deceased have to undergo from the angels of death, Nekyr and Monkyr, as soon as they are deposited in the tomb. "Don't believe a word of it!" cried one of the congregation, "for one of my slaves died a few days since; I filled his mouth with rice, and on digging him up again to-day, the rice was just as I left it. Now, it is morally impossible for a man to give answers even to angels, with his mouth full." Such an argument, brought forward in any other place than a mosque, in Turkey, would not have passed without answer.

PART IV.**MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.****CHAPTER I.****CHARACTER OF THE PERSIANS.**

NATURE, just in her gifts, has diffused them equally over the face of the globe. She has allotted to each climate its peculiar productions, good and bad, and has rarely refused to any region one species of tree or plant without bestowing some other in its stead. The same observation applies to the character of each nation, which is composed of a sum of good and bad qualities which counterbalance one another, and which are found in such proportions in that nation exclusively. It is a mark set upon it by the deity, and this mark it will retain in spite of human revolutions and the lapse of ages. We find ancient nations now degenerated and debased; yet there is none of them but has retained some of the primitive features of its character.

It would therefore be not less absurd to seek, than impossible to find, a nation without defects or without virtues: of course, we must balance the one against the other, and, according as the mass of good or bad qualities preponderates, we must form our judgment of the character of the nation which we are studying.

In delineating the character of the Persians, we can scarcely have a better guide than Chardin, whose long residence in the country, and whose intercourse with the great, enabled him to make himself intimately acquainted with the character of the nation, rather than with that of the lower classes, the number of whose vices is increased by the want of education.

The Persians are pre-eminent for intellectual qualities; their moral character exhibits a compound of the most odious defects. They have a sound understanding, a quick imagination, a ready memory, and a happy capacity for the sciences and the liberal and the mechanical arts. Under the appearance of a proud indifference, they derive information from the society of foreigners, and profit by their knowledge: they receive them kindly, patronize them, tolerate their religion, and regard them with pity rather than contempt. In illness and affliction, they even solicit the prayers of infidels; but this may proceed from superstition, rather than from toleration.

In conversation, the Persians affect elegant language, and are fond of introducing quotations from the works of their best poets, such as Saadi, Hafiz, and Djami. This love of quotations is common alike to persons of distinction, and to the dregs of the people; because those who have received no education, and cannot even read and write, take advantage of the readiness and retentiveness of their memory, to learn by heart a great number of striking passages, which they omit no opportunity of bringing forward. They are also very clever at irony and punning.

Endowed with a supple and intriguing disposition, they have agreeable manners and extreme politeness: but this politeness is little better than a jargon of high-flown compliments, and hyperbolic expressions, equally destitute of sense and feeling: hence it is, no doubt, that they have been denominated the French of Asia.

Mr. Morier gives several examples of this propensity of the Persians to flattery, hyperbole, and exaggeration. When the British embassy reached Shiraz, the visir of the prince-governor, attended by most of the principal men of the city, came out to meet the ambassador. When the usual routine of first compliments had been gone through, and repeated over and over again, the minister placed himself on one side of the ambassador, while the *mehmandar*, an officer appointed to attend distinguished strangers, and who acts as commissary, guard, and guide, was on the other. The *mehmandar* said to the minister: "How well the *elshee* (ambassador) talks Persian!"—"Well!" cried the minister: "he talks it admirably. He is superior to any *mollah*. We have never yet seen such an *elshee*, none so accomplished, none so clever, none so learned." To all this there was a chorus around of *belli, belli, belli*. The minister then turned to a person on the other side of him, and said, loud enough and expressly for the ambassador to hear: "Did you ever see any one so charming as the *elshee*, so much better than all other *elshees*?" The ambassador, in praising the climate of Shiraz, observed: "It is so fine, that I should have thought mankind never died here, had I not seen those tomb-stones,"—pointing to some which he was just passing. "Wonderful! wonderful!" exclaimed the *mehmandar*. "Did you hear that?" he roared out to the minister. "What a wit is the *elshee*!" He then repeated the joke to the minister, who likewise cried out: "Wonderful! wonderful!" as did all the others.

However impertinent this sort of barefaced flattery may appear to Europeans, in the eyes of the Persians the omission of it would be a neglect of the common forms of politeness. Mr. Morier was once present when the prime minister gave instructions to a man who was sent to greet a Russian officer on his

arrival, and his principal injunction was, "Be sure you give him plenty of flattery." They know, however, the real value of it as well as we; for at the same time he turned round to our countryman and said: "You know it is necessary *reesh-khum-dish bekuneem*—to laugh at his beard," or in other words to *humbug* him. Among themselves, they practise the same sort of deceit; and though they are in general aware of the value of the praise they receive, yet it does not fail to stimulate their vanity, which, as far back as the time of Herodotus, appears to have been a national vice; for he says, "they esteem themselves the most excellent of mankind."

In the embassy of Sir Harford Jones,—we quote the words of the same traveller—I once witnessed the introduction of one Persian to another, the principal *mirza* of the embassy to the chief jeweller. "What!" said the latter, "is this the renowned Aga Meer, that learned, that ingenious man, that famous pen-man?" and then went through such a rapid enumeration of virtues, qualities, personal charms, and family distinctions, that the *mirza* at first appeared quite overwhelmed: but by little and little he recovered, and returned so brisk a fire of compliments, as almost to annihilate the jeweller.

I have repeatedly heard them compliment a person, observes Mr. Scott Waring, either in his hearing, or in the presence of some one who would convey this adulation to his ears; and the instant that he has departed, their praises have turned into abuse, and they have, with malicious pleasure, exposed the character which not a moment before they praised with fervent servility.

I recollect, says the same writer, the Sheik at Bushire remonstrating against the rapacity of Chiragh Ali Khan, the governor of Shiraz, when he was informed of the arrival of his principal secretary. He began by inquiring after the governor's health, and when he was told that he had quitted the city, he readily observed, that, "now Shiraz was worthless, and that it had lost the only ornament it possessed."

This spirit of exaggeration and insincerity is not confined to their personal intercourse with one another: it insinuates itself into public affairs, as well as into the humbler relations between man and man.

Not long after the arrival of the English embassy, under Sir Gore Ouseley, at Teheran, the confidential secretary of the grand visir, accompanied by Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, who had been ambassador from Persia to the British court, came one morning in great agitation to announce a great victory gained by the prince-royal over the Russians. Their account was, that the Persians had killed 2000, and taken 5000 prisoners and

12 guns. We soon afterwards heard the real truth, says Mr. Morier, which reduced their account to 300 killed, two guns taken, and 500 made prisoners. On questioning them why they exaggerated so much, when they knew how soon the falsehood must be discovered, they very ingenuously replied:—"If we did not know that your stubborn veracity would have come in our way, we should have said ten times as much. This is the first time our troops have made any stand at all against the Russians; and you would not surely restrict so glorious an event in our history to a few dry facts."

The Persian army, adds the traveller, amounted, on this occasion, by their own account, to 9000, or according to the English officers employed in it, to 14,000 men, among whom was a corps of flying artillery with 12 guns, to which chiefly its success was owing. The Russians, 800 in number, not expecting any attack from the latter kind of force, had neglected to send for succours. After losing 300 men, the rest capitulated. One of the articles of capitulation was, that their heads were not to be cut off: a practice which is quite common in Persian and Turkish warfare. During the fight, ten *toomauns* were given for every head of the enemy brought to the prince; and it has been known to occur, that after the combat was over, prisoners have been put to death in cold blood, in order that the heads, which are immediately despatched to the king, and deposited in heaps at the palace gate, might make a more considerable show. The Persians lost 100 men, a circumstance which rejoiced the king's ministers exceedingly; for on no preceding occasion had their troops been known to approach near enough to the enemy to get killed.

Passionately fond of pleasure and luxury, and voluptuous to excess, the Persians are unboundedly prodigal. Hence they acquire merely to expend: with them the enjoyment of the present day is every thing, and the morrow belongs to God.

A Persian will never blaspheme the name of God, but he will invoke him without occasion. He will one moment pronounce that sacred name with the same lips which the next are pouring forth the grossest obscenities: he will punctually recite his prayers; he will purify himself several times a day; he will avoid all corporeal contamination, the contact of a person of a different religion, or the admission of such a person into his house in rainy weather, since the wet from his clothes would render impure whatever it touched, whether persons or furniture: but he will bear false witness for the sake of filthy lucre; he will borrow without returning, or even deny his debt; he will seize every opportunity of cheating; he will be destitute of sincerity in the service of his friend, of fidelity in his engagements,

and of honesty in trade: in short, while he outwardly exhibits the bark of all the virtues, the sap of vice will circulate through all his actions.

A French traveller, M. Olivier, has drawn a very just comparison between the Turks and Persians, from which we shall quote a few passages.

In Turkey, every thing bears the stamp of barbarism and cruelty: in Persia, every thing bespeaks a mild and civilized nation. The Turks are vain, supercilious, inhospitable: the Persians polite, complimentary and obliging.

Though at the present day equally superstitious with the Turks, the Persians are not so fanatical: in some particulars, they carry their scruples to a greater length than the former; in general, they will not eat with a person of a different religion; they will not drink out of a cup or a glass which has been used by a Christian, a Jew, or an Indian, and yet they admit any one into their mosques. They listen with patience to all the objections you have to urge against their religion, and to whatever you may say against their prophet and their Imams; whereas the Turk would murder you, if in his hearing you were to speak irreverently of Mahomet and his laws. The Persian looks at you with pity, and prays to heaven that the truth may be revealed to you in all its lustre. He avoids the subject of religion, but continues to treat you with the same kindness and friendship as ever.

Equally brave with the Turk, more active but less patient, he is, like the other, cruel in battle and implacable towards his armed foe; but more tractable after the combat, and more sociable after peace.

Insurrections for overthrowing the sovereign or his ministers, for plundering caravans, or for laying a city or a province under contribution, are less frequent in Persia than in Turkey. The Persian, however, ranks beneath the Turk in point of morals and perhaps also of character. If the first is better informed, more polite, more gentle, than the second; if he less frequently disturbs the tranquillity of the state; if he does not so often threaten the lives and property of his fellow-citizens; if he pays more respect to weakness in either sex; he possesses neither that pride nor that magnanimity, neither that self-esteem, that confidence in friendship, nor that devoted attachment to his benefactor, which occasionally produce great things in the Turk.

The Persians seem to be a degenerate people, whose vices have increased during the troubles of the country; whose virtues are perhaps at present but the shadow of what they once were, when the laws were in full vigour, when talents were encouraged, when integrity was honoured, and when each, secure

in the possession of his property, could augment it by honest exertions.

The Turks, on the other hand, are a new nation, having all the coarseness, rudeness, and ignorance, of one which civilization has not polished, and which instruction has not meliorated. Under an able government, the Persians would rebuild their cities, re-establish their commerce, and repair the injuries which their agriculture has sustained. With a vigorous, active, and intelligent government, the Turk would perhaps once more strike terror into Europe.

From these different traits we are authorized to conclude, that the society of the Persians is agreeable, if the connexion between the parties is disinterested: but we must not expect from them either sincere friendship, strict integrity, or refined delicacy.

To judge from the Guebres, the relics of the ancient Persians, they were originally a coarse-looking race of people; but their blood has since been refined by the intermixture with that of Georgia and Circassia. There are few Persians of quality, who are not sprung from women of those nations: and as this intermixture has been practised for several centuries, both sexes have been greatly improved by it. The men are tall and well-proportioned, vigorous, active, and comely. The women, without being qualified to vie with those of Georgia in beauty, are in general handsome in face and figure.



CHAPTER II.

NOMINATION AND CIRCUMCISION OF INFANTS.

It is an established custom among all nations, to accompany the birth and nomination of children with ceremonies and diversions; which differ with the manners of the respective countries.

In Persia, on the birth of a son, some confidential person about the *harem* is usually the first to get the information, when he runs in great haste to his master, and says: *Mujdeh!* or "good news!" by which he secures to himself a gift, which generally follows the *mujdeh*. Among the common people, the man who brings the *mujdeh*, frequently seizes the cap or shawl, or any article belonging to the father, as a security for the present to which he holds himself entitled.

On the birth of a child, the Persians wash, clothe, and swathe it in a long bandage, called the *kandak*, that entirely encircles the infant from the neck downwards, keeping its arms pinioned

to its sides, so that it cannot stir either hand or foot. They then place it under the same bed-clothes with the mother. The midwife pronounces in the ear of the child the profession of the Musulman faith, in virtue of which the child is received into the number of the true believers. It is remarkable, that immediately afterwards they perform a ceremony, which may be supposed to have an indistinct reference to Christianity; for in the room where the child is born, the midwife takes a word, and with the point draws a line on the four walls. One of the women in attendance asks: "What are you about?"—the other answers: "I am tracing a tower for Mariam and her child." Mr. Morier says, that he could never learn the origin or intention of this ceremony. A similar practice, according to Buxtorf, is common among the modern Jews.

On the day of the woman's confinement, a certain food is prepared for her, of which all those present at the birth partake, and portions of it are likewise sent to all her other friends. On the third day after the delivery, she is taken to the bath, where she performs the ablutions and purifications prescribed by the Mahometan law. The eastern women suffer little from parturition, the better sort being frequently on foot the day after their delivery, and out of all confinement on the third day.

The Persians and the Asiatics in general suckle their children much longer than the Europeans: to a boy they give the breast two years and two months, and to a girl only two years complete. On the day that the child is to be weaned, they carry it to the mosque, and after performing certain acts of devotion, return home, and, collecting their friends and relations, give a feast of which they make the child also partake.

The evil eye is as much feared in Persia as in other parts of Asia. They hang about the child's neck, or sew to its cap, a bangle of the colour of a turquoise, which they look upon as most fortunate, and which serves to annul the glance of an evil eye. They also insert paragraphs of the Koran into little bags, which they sew on the child's cap, or on its sleeve, esteeming them great preservatives against sickness. If a visitor should praise the looks of a child, and the latter should afterwards fall sick, the visitor immediately gets the reputation of having an evil eye; and the remedy is to take part of his clothes, which, with the seed of a species of cress, they burn in a chaffing-dish, walking round and round the child. Him who has the reputation of having an evil eye, they keep at a distance.

The Persians observe the same ceremonies at the circumcision and naming of children as the Turks; but they have another custom on the occasion, called *akikah*. The father of the child kills a sheep, of the flesh of which he makes broth, but

cautiously preserves all the bones. He invites his friends, relations, and the poor in the highways, to partake of this food, from which he and his wife are excluded, and having selected a clean place near some running water, he there buries them.

They adopt also certain ceremonies about shaving the child's head. It frequently happens after the birth of a son, that if the parent be in distress or the child sick, or there be any other cause of grief, the mother makes a vow that no razor shall come upon the child's head for a certain portion of time, and sometimes for all his life. If the child recovers, and the cause of her grief be removed, and if the vow be but for a time, then she shaves his head at the end of that time, makes a small entertainment, collects money and other things from her relations and friends, which are sent as *nezers* (offerings) to the mosque at Kerbelah, and there consecrated.

The circumcision of the children of people of distinction is always attended with extraordinary festivities, in which parents display all the profusion that their circumstances admit of. Mr. Franklin happened to be at Shiraz, when the son of Djafar Khan, prince of that city, was circumcised. All the bazars were illuminated, and adorned with lustres and coloured lamps; the walls were hung with beautiful tapestry, and decorated with mirrors, flowers, and pictures; and the shops were embellished with the greatest care. Companies of musicians and female dancers were to be seen night and day, in the streets and public places, exhibiting pantomimes and other entertainments. These festivities lasted a whole week.

The Persians have no family name. Every male at his birth receives one taken from the Old Testament, the Koran, or the Mahometan history, or compounded of two words, the first signifying servant, and that which follows being one of the epithets of God. They have also pre-names and surnames, to which they affix the names of their father and ancestors, if they are desirous of indicating their descent. In the pre-name it is common to add to the word *abou*, father, that of a man's son: the surname is almost always an epithet or title of honour. This practice is common among the Arabs, as well as the Persians. The great Saladin, for instance, was called Aboul-Modhaffer Yousef-ben-Ayoub Selah-eddin. His pre-name was Abou'l-Modhaffer, father of the victorious; his proper name, Yousef, that of his father, Ayoub, *ben* signifying son; and his surname, Selah-eddin, the support of religion. To these denominations is sometimes appended an adjective denoting a person's birth-place, or the tribe to which he belongs.

CHAPTER III.

EDUCATION OF THE PERSIANS.

EDUCATION is far from being neglected by any class of the people. Persons of high rank have their children instructed by *mollahs* and other preceptors, who attend their pupils at the houses of their parents. The lower orders, and often considerable Persians who are under the condition of nobles, send their sons to the public schools established in every town. They are commonly held in the mosques, and sometimes in the houses of the teachers, who are mostly *mollahs*. The expense of each child's education annually amounts to scarcely a *toomaun*, not much more than half a guinea—a price greatly in favour of the advancement of learning. The scholars sit round their master on the matted floor, all conning their lessons aloud as they learn them, and not stopping their noise even when the teacher is officially hearing one of the other pupils read. This little seminary presents a curious sight to a European; for, besides the rapid motion of their lips, they keep their bodies in one continued seesaw, without which movement a Persian conceives it would be impossible to learn anything. When idleness or any other misdemeanour requires chastisement, the young culprit undergoes the same punishment as that which royalty at times inflicts on any offending nobleman—namely, the bastinado on the soles of the feet. The children are taught reading and writing; and as soon as they can commit to memory, they learn passages from the favourite poets of the country, many of which are fraught with the noblest sentiments and the most amiable feelings of human nature. At the same time they are taught prayers from the Koran in Arabic, a language which they do not in general understand; but the meaning of the prayer is explained to them, and they are directed on what occasions to repeat it. Youth of the higher classes often add a knowledge of the Arabic, and also the Turkish language, to their deeper studies. The usual list are—arithmetic, geometry, moral philosophy, astronomy, and not unfrequently astrology, all of which are cultivated with considerable assiduity and success by most of the Persian gentlemen, who never fail to add the manly exercises to these liberal acquirements. This being the case, it is difficult to comprehend the ruin and neglect into which the colleges of nearly all the great cities have fallen: the once noble establishments of Ardebil, Casvin, Ispahan, Shiraz, &c. being mere shadows of what they formerly were.

A youth quits his preceptor at the age of eighteen. He then

learns to bend the bow, to wield the sabre, and to manage a horse. Marriage releases him from all restraint, but not from the respect which he owes to his father. The sacred rights of paternity are never violated in the East: there a son, whatever may be his age or condition, never sits in the presence of his father; but his movements and whole demeanour are marked with filial submission.

More pains are bestowed on the education of the children of the lower classes, than in Europe. They are never seen running about the streets, getting corrupted by bad examples and bad language, contracting a fondness for play, quarrelling and fighting. They usually begin to go to school at the age of six years, and attend it twice a day. On their return, their parents keep them at home, to accustom them early to the business for which they design them.



CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE.

THE mode of matrimonial courtships in Persia, does not allow the eyes of the parties to direct their choice till they are mutually pledged to each other. An elderly female is employed by the relations of the youth to visit the object selected by his parents or friends, or guessed at by himself; and her office is to ascertain the damsel's personal endowments, and all other subjects suitable to their views in the connexion. If the report be favourable, the friends of the proposed bridegroom despatch certain sponsors to explain his merits and pretensions to the relations of the lady, and to make the offer of marriage in due form. If accepted, the heads of the two families meet, when the necessary contracts are drawn up; the presents, ornaments, and other advantages proposed by the bridegroom's parents, discussed and arranged; and when all is finally settled, the papers are sealed and witnessed before the Cadi.

On the morning of the day fixed for the wedding, the lover sends a train of mules laden with the promised gifts for his bride, to the house of her parents; the whole being attended by numerous servants, and preceded by music and drums. Besides the presents for the lady, the procession carries all sorts of costly viands on large silver trays, ready prepared to be immediately spread before the inmates of the house. The whole of the day is spent in feasting and jollity: towards evening, the damsel makes her appearance enveloped in a long veil of scarlet or crimson silk, and being placed on a horse or mule splendidly

caparisoned, is conducted to the habitation of her affianced husband by all her relations, marching in regular order to the sound of the same clamorous band which had escorted the presents. When alighted at the bridegroom's door, the lady is led to her future apartments within the house, accompanied by her female relations and waiting-maids. Her friends of the other sex meanwhile repair to those of the bridegroom, where all the male relations on both sides being assembled, the feasting and rejoicing recommences; with the drums and other musical instruments still playing the most conspicuous part. When the supper-feast is over, the blushing bride is conducted to the nuptial chamber, and there the impatient lover first beholds his love, and the marriage is consummated without farther ceremony. The bridegroom, not long after, returns to his party, and an ancient matron in waiting leads the lady back to her female friends. A prescribed time is allowed for both sets of relations to congratulate the young people on their union, after which they repair to the bridal chamber for the night, leaving their separate companies to keep up the revelry, which generally lasts for three days.

The marriage contract stipulates the settlement on the bride, of such jointure as may be agreed upon. It consists of a sum of money, proportionate to the fortune of the bridegroom, and other presents. If he is in middling circumstances, he presents her with two complete dresses, a ring, and a mirror. This jointure, called *mihir* or *kavin*, is destined for the support of the wife in case of divorce. The husband also supplies the requisite furniture, carpets, mats, culinary utensils, and other necessities.

It would be deemed the greatest possible disgrace, to take back the bride after she has left her own home to go to the house of the bridegroom. When, therefore, the latter has promised a jointure beyond his means, a curious scene sometimes ensues. He shuts his door against the cavalcade, and declares that he will not have the girl unless the jointure be reduced to a certain sum. A negotiation takes place between the parties, and the matter is finally adjusted according to the wishes of the bridegroom.



CHAPTER V.

FUNERALS AND TOMBS.

THE Persians inter their dead with the same ceremonies which are practised by other Mahometan nations.

Though religion forbids graves to be covered with any struc-

ture whatever, yet the ostentation of the great has violated this precept, and left the observance of it to the very lowest class, who have only a piece of stone set up vertically at the end of the grave, with a moral inscription, or a passage from the Koran. The tombs of the poorer sort of people are built with bricks, with a small piece of marble at the head for the epitaph. Stone lions and rams rudely sculptured are very frequently seen in Persian burial-grounds, and are placed over the tombs of soldiers or those famed for their courage. The rich have over their tombs small cupolas resting on four pilasters. The largest and most considerable are called *takieh*, and are built over the remains of holy and learned men. Around these and such like monuments, are in general to be seen collections of minor tombs; for it is a received opinion, that those who are buried in the vicinity of a holy personage will meet with his support at the day of resurrection. The Persians, however, do not take the same care of their dead as the Turks. Their tombs are trampled on; paths frequently lead right over them; and epitaph, tomb-stone and all, are often carried away to be used as materials for building. The terrace which supports the gardens and buildings of the Bagh Jehan Nemah, at Shiraz, is almost entirely composed of tomb-stones; and at Ispahan, sepulchral inscriptions are often seen on the surface of a wall.

Mourning lasts forty days at the utmost. Black is not the livery of sorrow: that colour is abhorred by the Persians. They express grief, and mark the state of mourning, by sighs and moans, by abstaining from food for eight days, and by wearing garments of a brown or pale colour, adapted to the state of the mind. For ten days, their friends pay them frequent visits, and afford them all the consolations in their power. On the ninth, they take them to the bath, have their heads shaved, and supply them with new clothes. Here ends the full mourning: but their lamentations continue till the fortieth day; and they renew them twice or thrice a week, always at the hour when the deceased expired.

The grief of the women is more strongly expressed, and of longer continuance. Endowed by nature with keener sensibility than the other sex, and left by the death of a husband in a state of forlorn widowhood, to which they are generally doomed for the rest of their lives, they mourn for many months, paying daily visits to the grave, watering it with their tears, rending their garments, imposing on themselves bodily mortifications, and, in short, setting no bounds to the expression of their sorrow.

CHAPTER VI.

COSTUME OF THE PERSIANS.

“ If the prudence of a nation were manifested in a stedfast adherence to its costume, the Persians could not be too highly praised for that quality ; for their dress never alters ; they never make any change either in the colour or fashion of the stuff. I have seen dresses belonging to Tamerlane, which are preserved in the royal treasury at Ispahan, and which are cut in the very fashion of the present day, without the slightest difference.” Such was the remark of Chardin, nearly two centuries ago : but could the same traveller now revisit Persia, he would fancy himself in another country, such are the changes effected by the late revolutions in the state of the kingdom and the costume of its inhabitants.

In Chardin’s time, all colours, black excepted, were worn indiscriminately. Under the dynasty of the Zends, light colours were preferred ; but since the family of the Cadjars has filled the throne, the darker hues have been the fashion.

The form of garments also has undergone great change: and the dandy, if such a character exists in Persia, cannot appear but in clothes of the true Cadjar cut, the only style of dress that is considered as fashionable.

The garments composing the dress of a Persian are the following :—

1. The *zeer djameh*, a species of very wide trowsers, made of cotton cloth or silk, which reach down to the ancles, and are tied at the waist in front.

2. The *peerahun*, or shirt, of silk, comes over the trowsers, and falls a little below the hips. It is shaped at top like a woman’s chemise, having no collar, and is fastened by means of two buttons over the left shoulder.

3. The *erkalig*, a very tight vest, which falls to the bend of the knee ; the sleeves descend to the wrist, but are open from the elbow. It is made of Mahometan chintz, or fine shawls.

4. The *caba*, a long robe reaching to the ancles, fits close down to the hips, and buttons on the sides. The sleeves of the *caba* cover those of the *erkalig*, and are held together from the elbow downward by a row of buttons, so that they may be opened for the performance of the prescribed ablutions previously to prayers. The *caba* is made of various kinds of cloths, some of which are very magnificent and expensive.

The *bagalee* is another kind of robe, which folds over the breast, and buttons on the side, down to the hip. This garment

is generally made of cloth, shawl, or cotton stuff folded; and is worn in winter only.

5. The outer robe is always of cloth; it is worn or not, according to the weather. The robe has as many names as there are forms of which it is susceptible. It is called *tikmeh*, when the sleeves are open as high as the elbow, and when it is round, buttons before, and falls like a petticoat over the shawl that serves for a girdle; *omeh*, when it is open on both sides from the hips; and *biroonee*, when it is loose, with wide sleeves hanging carelessly from the shoulders.

6. The *shalee-kemr*, or shawl girdle, fastened round the waist over the *caba*. This girdle is, according to the circumstances of the wearer, either a real Cashmere, a Kerman shawl, or a piece of flowered muslin. In this girdle is stuck the *candjar*, a kind of dagger, the handle of which is sometimes enriched with precious stones, and at others merely of ivory or wood.

The Persians have, also, pelisses of very rich stuff, trimmed with furs, such as the *catabee*, which covers the whole body, and is trimmed with fur down the back, at the shoulders, at the elbows, and in the inside. This is the richest and most showy garment of the whole Persian costume.

The *coordee*, a sort of jacket, which fits close to the body and the skirts of which fall over the thighs. The *catabee* and *coordee* were worn in Chardin's time.

The *kolah*, or cap, worn by the Persians, while more convenient, keeps the head not less warm than the turban. It is made of lamb-skin, with short, curly black wool, lined with a greyish skin of not so fine a quality, terminating in a skull-cap of red or azure blue cloth, or merely of white sheep-skin. The only distinction there is in this species of head-dress, consists in a shawl wound about the *kolah*; and this distinction is reserved for the king, the princes of his family and a few of the nobles, the great officers of state, and the magistrates.

The inhabitants of the town wear, in winter, socks of worsted or cotton. The country people wear no stockings in summer, and in winter they wrap pieces of cloth about their legs.

The Persians have three sorts of shoes or slippers, and two of boots. People of the higher classes wear green slippers, with heels an inch thick. A low slipper, of red or yellow leather, having an iron in shape of a horse-shoe at the heel, was formerly worn. The lower classes use strong shoes of leather or quilted cotton, with flat soles, and turned up at the toes.

One of the sorts of boots has high heels, turns up at the toe, and covers the whole leg. The others are smaller, tighter, and only reach up to the calf.

When a Persian is going to ride, he puts on a pair of wide





PERSIAN OF HIGH RANK.

cloth trowsers, called *shahwar*, into which he introduces the skirts of the *erkalig* and the *zeer-djameh*. A Persian of distinction, thus equipped and mounted, is represented in the engraving opposite to this page.

The dress of the Persians of the superior classes is very expensive, frequently amounting to sixty or one hundred guineas. It is admirably calculated for either a hot or cold climate: it imposes no restraint on the limbs, and may be put on or thrown off in five minutes. The poor people wear no cap, and but little clothes in summer; but when the cold weather comes, they make dresses of sheep-skins.

The merchants never wear scarlet or crimson cloths, or use silver or gold buttons to their robes: this may not possibly amount to a prohibition, but the effect is the same. Shah Abbas, who wished to make this class of his subjects very frugal, issued an order that they were always to wear shawl turbans, and robes of broad cloth. This would be, in his opinion, the cheapest dress they could wear, as the shawl would serve them for their lives, and descend to their children, and the cloths would last several years.

It should be observed, that the wearing of silk is interdicted by the Musulman law, on account of its being an excrement. The Persians, however, evade this prohibition, by mixing with the silk a very small portion of cotton. A large quantity of this kind of cloth is imported into Persia from Guzerat.

Although the Persians bathe so often, they are a very dirty people. They very rarely change their garments, and seldom before it is dangerous to come near them: indeed, they think nothing of wearing a shirt a month, and a pair of trowsers half a year.

The Persians have a high esteem for the beard, which is an object of their incessant care and attention. In Egypt, it indicates a state of liberty; in Persia, it is worn alike by the slave and the master: there, the condition of the eunuch is too much despised for any one to wish to resemble him in any particular.

Black bushy beards are held in the greatest estimation: accordingly, all are of this colour; for men of a fair complexion dye their beards, as well to please the women as to give themselves a look of youth and vigour. It is more difficult to make them bushy: ointments, pomatums, and drugs of all sorts, are early employed to impart to them this species of beauty; but nature is seldom to be overcome by such applications.

Nothing can exceed the attention paid by a Persian to his beard. In the morning, as soon as he rises, at night before he retires to rest, after his meals, and several times in the course of the day, he carefully washes it, dries it with a cloth, combs

and trims it. A mirror and a comb, which he always carries about him, enable him to adjust it at any moment of the day, when it has been deranged by the wind or by the accidental brushing of something against it.

The beard is fresh dyed every fortnight. The operation is as follows. A paste is first made with *henna*, and copiously rubbed over the beard. It is removed in an hour, by which time it has communicated a deep orange colour to the hair. Another paste, made of indigo leaves reduced to powder, is then applied, and left on two hours. During this time, the person lies at full length on his back. When this indigo paste is removed, the beard appears of a dark green colour, which turns to black after twenty-four hours' exposure to the air.

The Persians shave the head twice or three times a week. Some have a lock of hair growing on the crown, after the fashion of the Turks; others retain only a border above the ears.

It is also customary, as a piece of finery, to dye the nails of the hands and feet with the *henna* just mentioned, which is nothing but the pulverized leaves of the *cyperus*. Sometimes, the whole of the hands up to the wrist, the soles of the feet, and the toes, are stained with the same orange-coloured tincture.

To convey a more complete idea of the general appearance of a Persian of distinction, we annex a portrait of Myr Daoud Zadour, a native of Persian Armenia, who, a few years since, filled the post of envoy from the king of Persia to the court of France. His conduct in this situation was highly creditable to himself, and to the master whom he served; and to his pen we are indebted for a small tract with the title of *Particulars respecting the present State of Persia*, published at Paris, in 1818, in the Persian, Armenian, and French languages, of which we have not failed to avail ourselves, in the compilation of these volumes.



CHAPTER VII.

OF THE WOMEN OF PERSIA.



SECTION I.

OF THEIR EDUCATION.

THE women of Persia, like those of all Mahometan countries, receive no moral education whatever. When they have learned reading, writing, and embroidery, their education is finished; and those things they are taught either by females hired for the



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purpose, or at the schools which they frequent till they have attained such an age as not to be permitted to go abroad without a veil. Neither dancing, music, and other accomplishments, nor reading and study, ever develope or heighten their natural graces, or enrich their minds. Living shut up in a *harem*, visiting and being visited by none but females, society never forms their manners; the power of human respect opposes no barrier to their passions, to the vices of their hearts, and to the extravagances of their disposition: the intercourse with women perverts rather than purifies their morals. The mother exclusively superintends the education of her daughter, and faithfully transmits to her defects which were not corrected when she was herself young: virtue and modesty are terms which she never utters in her hearing, for they are terms as unmeaning to the one as to the other. She familiarizes her with but one idea—that she is one day to belong to an absolute master, whose love she must strive to acquire, not by practising the virtues of her sex and condition, but by the arts of refined coquetry, which, though they may excite passion, are an antidote to true conjugal tenderness, which is founded on mutual esteem and regard. She does not teach her how to become a good wife and mother, or inculcate that modesty, and that chaste reserve in all her motions, language, and actions; which adorn beauty and embellish plainness; but she enjoins her not to go abroad without muffling up her face and her whole person; not to look at a man, nor to engage in any intrigues; if, however, she does not instruct her in the art which she has herself learned by experience, of bringing them to a fortunate conclusion.

Thus the females of Persia receive no other than a physical education, the care of their morals being left to nature, till the moment when example corrupts them. Hence we need not be surprised at the unfavourable character given of them by travellers.

The Persian women, like the Indian, says Mr. Scott Waring, are totally devoid of delicacy: their language is often gross and disgusting, nor do they feel less hesitation in expressing themselves before men, than they would before their female associates. Their terms of abuse or reproach are indelicate to the highest degree: it may safely be averred that it is not possible for the imagination to conceive, or language to express, more indecent or grosser images.

SECTION II.

OF THE CONDITION OF THE FEMALE SEX IN PERSIA.

We never think of the women of Asia, without deploring the severity of their lot. We figure them to ourselves thwarted in all their inclinations, restrained in all their actions, watched with degrading vigilance, exposed to the caprices, the insults and torments of jealousy: compelled to regulate their habits and actions by the wishes of an imperious master; torn from their parents, the protectors of their childhood, and the companions of their early years; disappointed in the hopes which their youthful imaginations had fondly indulged; floating incessantly, according to the whim of their lord, between the condition of mistress and that of slave; lastly, doomed to live imprisoned in a *harem*, and to receive the caresses of an object for whom they can feel no other sentiment than hatred—what pleasures could ever make amends for the horrors of such a life?

Mirza-Abu-Taleb, a Persian, who resided some time in England, and committed to writing his observations on our manners, which were afterwards given to the public in an English dress, has endeavoured to prove, in his work, that these women, who are the objects of our pity, enjoy a condition far preferable to that of European females. It is curious to see how he establishes so extraordinary a position.

Six reasons, according to this writer, cause us to think that the women of Asia have less liberty than those of Europe:—

1. The little intercourse which they have with the other sex, and the seclusion in which they live.
2. The power granted to men, by law, of marrying four wives.
3. The right of divorce possessed by the husband.
4. The small degree of credit attached to the testimony of women.
5. The custom which forbids women to be present at public diversions, or to use personal ornaments after the decease of their husbands.
6. The custom which denies females the liberty of rejecting a husband.

Abu Taleb does not strive to overthrow the first of these reasons; but he asserts that the liberty enjoyed by our European women is a calculation of interest. If we live in the same apartments with them, and admit them to our repasts, it is because we cannot afford to keep up two establishments: if they share our beds, it is owing to want of room and the coldness of the climate; if they go abroad without restraint and intermeddle with our affairs, it is on account of the duties which they have to fulfil, and the experience in business which it is necessary for them to acquire.

As to the perpetual seclusion to which the Asiatic women are condemned, this Persian denies its severity and extols its advantages. These females, he says, have not the least desire to go abroad; what with us is a pleasure would be to them a derogation from their honour: they would think themselves contaminated by mingling with the vulgar, and by the contact of rude and brutal passengers in the streets. Besides, as well from habit as inclination, they are fond of repose, which they prefer to the activity of a European life: and it is easy to appreciate the advantages of seclusion, from the time which it affords for useful employments. It is wrong to suppose that they are debarred from any liberty, and from the society of men. They may enjoy the company of the relatives of their father and mother, and that of their aged domestics; they may go in palanquins to the houses of their relations, and to visit women of their own rank, without giving their husbands previous notice of their intentions; and they may walk in the gardens, after they have been cleared of persons of the other sex.

The privilege given to men of marrying several wives, seems, says Abu Taleb, to arise out of the nature and physical constitution of women, which require temporary separations. The laws of Asia, in permitting polygamy, do justice to the one sex without wronging the other. The honour of the legitimate wife sustains no injury from it; for a female who surrenders her person to a married man is never of superior condition, neither is she admitted into the society of *ladies*, but treated in the same manner as a kept mistress is in Europe.

The notion that all Asiatics have four lawful wives, is very erroneous; for in general, they have but one.

The husband rarely avails himself of the right of divorce: on the contrary, divorces are almost always granted against his will, and at the solicitation of the wife; for he prefers the infliction of some punishment to separation from her.

The inexperience of women, and the levity of their character, furnished occasion for that article of the law which requires the testimony of four of them, in cases where the declaration of two men would be deemed sufficient.

Attachment to a husband, and respect for his memory, naturally suggest the custom practised by the Asiatic women, of abstaining after his death from diversions, sumptuous apparel, and jewels. How can they bestow attention on dress and on the pleasures of the world, when their souls must be overwhelmed with grief? Feeling and decorum alike prescribe this line of conduct.

In Europe, the liberty allowed to females of choosing a husband is merely ideal; for after all, it is the will of the father only

that authorizes and sanctions their choice: in regard to this point, therefore, our customs perfectly correspond with those of the East.

Having thus combated the reasons which give us false notions of the condition of Asiatic women, Abu Taleb enumerates under eight heads the advantages conferred on them by custom and the laws—advantages not enjoyed by the women of Europe. They are in substance as follows:—

In the East, custom grants to the wife large claims on the property of the husband; this is one of the results of despotic power. As the fortune of the latter depends on the good pleasure of the sovereign, he makes it over to his wife, such property being always secure. It is frequently the case, that in his old age he is reduced to indigence, and that, however extensive his possessions, he is obliged to be satisfied with the alimony which she allows him, because, in the eye of the law, he possesses nothing.

It is custom also which gives the mother absolute power over the education of the children. Their settlement in life depends on her will: her opposition alone prevents a match projected for them by the father, whereas the opposition of the latter would be no obstacle to the conclusion of one if decided upon by the mother.

The wife possesses all the authority over her own and her husband's servants. She may punish or discharge them at pleasure, without fear of being thwarted or crossed: she is not put to the trouble of doing the honours of a company or a table, or obliged to go through any of those tedious ceremonies, which, in my opinion, says Abu Taleb, could not fail to render the lives of European women most irksome, were they not made subservient to coquetry and vanity.

This same female, whose servitude we deplore, acquires, on entering the *harem*, the imprescriptible right of tormenting her lord; nay, it is an essential and integral quality of beauty.

Her own interest would compel her, were she not led by inclination, to resort to the arts of coquetry; her caprices enhance the value of her charms; the waywardness of her humour, the fickleness of her disposition, and her imperious temper, are qualities which, in the estimation of fondness, far surpass the timid submission of an affectionate and virtuous wife. If she were mild and gentle, she would be overlooked; forward, capricious and dissipated, she is adored. Thus, on all occasions, she causes the pleasure of her presence to be purchased by the delay which precedes the grant of it; and if she goes abroad to pay a visit, she does not return to the *harem* till her husband has sent several times after her.

It is amusing enough to find Abu Taleb reckoning liberty, and the confidence of the men in the virtue of the sex, among the advantages of the condition of Asiatic women. In Europe, he observes, a woman may indeed go about where she pleases, and converse with strangers, but yet she never stirs a step without being accompanied: whereas, in the East she might absent herself several days, and pass them with her relatives or friends, even without the permission of her husband.

In case of divorce, the laws of most European countries deprive a mother of the children whose education has occupied the best part of her life. In Asia, she retains the girls; the law allowing the father to take the male children only.

Lastly, the woman who is ill-treated by her husband can quit his house to seek an asylum with her father or some other relation: and she absents herself, till due reparation is made for the affront offered to her feelings.

Such, according to Abu Taleb, are the advantages enjoyed by females in the East. Without pretending to examine whether they are real or chimerical, we shall confine ourselves to a few remarks on one point, that is, *liberty*.

For Asiatic women, there is really and truly no such thing as liberty. The very circumstance of their being allowed to leave their homes for several days, seems to be a fresh proof of the jealousy of man rather than of his confidence in their virtue. A Mahometan, who tolerates the absence of his wives, well knows, that in quitting his *harem* they have merely changed their prison, and that in their temporary abode they will be not less carefully watched and secluded from the society of men than in his own house: his security therefore springs from his confidence in the jealousy of another.

It may admit of a question, whether the privation of this liberty be so great a hardship as we suppose. Most probably it is not. We judge in general of things by comparing them with our own customs, manners, and opinions; and hence the erroneous notions and ideas that we form. Pleasure and pain depend much on habit; what pleases in one country, disgusts in another. We are unable to conceive a more wretched condition than that of a woman whose life is passed in a *harem*; but this woman, who from disposition and habit is fond of repose, who has never known the pleasure of attracting the attention of the other sex, and eclipsing her own in personal charms, and in splendour and elegance of dress, cannot imagine that in other countries a female would compromise her honour, her dignity, and her modesty, by exposing her face unveiled to the public eye, and mingling among crowds of pedestrians. Of course, she does not complain of being deprived of a liberty adverse to

her manners; for she cannot regret the want of that which she knows nothing of.

It is to be presumed, however, that the degrees of happiness enjoyed by a Persian female vary according to her condition. She, whom fortune has placed in the middling class of life, and whose husband's circumstances and rank are too low to admit of his keeping several wives, must naturally be happier than the female destined to grace the *harem* of a grandee, where she will groan under the yoke of a eunuch.

SECTION III.

OCCUPATIONS AND WAY OF LIFE OF THE WOMEN OF PERSIA.

The occupations of the Persian women are more diversified than might be supposed. They spin, embroider, work with the needle, and make their own apparel. They superintend also whatever relates to the interior of the house; they keep an account of the daily expenditure, deliver out the provisions to the servants, pay their wages, adjust their disputes, and even see that proper attention is paid to the horses. In every house of any consequence, there is a eunuch, called *nazir*, steward, with whom the mistress of the house daily consults, and decides on every thing relating to the servants and domestic concerns.

Sir Robert Porter gives the following lively picture of the employments of women belonging to what may be called the middling class. The originals after whom it was delineated, were the four wives of a man in whose house he was entertained.

From the hour of rising, says this traveller, to that of going to rest, the house sounded with one continual clatter of female voices mingling with the cries of children and the bustling clamour of varied occupation. These women do all the laborious part of the household establishment, each having her own especial department, such as baking the bread, cooking the meat, drawing the water, &c.; and though the latest espoused is usually spared in these labours and the best dressed, still the whole party seem to remain in good humour, no appearance of jealousy disturbing the amicable routine of their proceedings. When their lord shows himself among them, it is like a master coming into a herd of favourite animals; they all rush forward, frisking about him, pleased with a caress; or frisking still, if they meet with a pat instead.—The four wives of my worthy host retire at sunset from their domestic toils; and each, taking her infant and cradle to the roof of her division of the house, not forgetting the skin of water she has brought from the spring or well, deposits her babe in safety, and suspends the water-case near her

bed on a tripod of sticks, in order that the evaporation may cool it for the night or next days's use. To preserve the amity between these ladies, which had so excited my admiration, our communicative host told me that himself, in common with all husbands who preferred peace to passion, adhered to a certain rule of each wife, claiming in regular rotation the connubial attentions of her spouse.—Wherever this monopoly of many women exists, there we find the softer sex regarded by man with a contempt which gives the loveliest bride, or the most respectable mother of his children, scarcely a higher rank in his esteem than the best mare in his stud, or the dog that is his favourite to-day and totally neglected to-morrow. In proof of this Mahometan disparagement of women in general, it would be deemed the height of impropriety, while addressing a person of noble quality here, to hint at the female part of his family; and were even the most beloved wife of his bosom at the extremity of some dangerous illness, if a male friend were to make the slightest inquiry after her health, it would be deemed the grossest insult.

Of this remark we find a striking illustration, in a subsequent part of the work of the same entertaining traveller. In his journey from Persia through Asiatic Turkey, he fell in with a party belonging to Abdul Hassan Khan, then Persian ambassador in London. These people were returning from England to Teheran; and under their charge, mounted on a sorry post-horse, was *the Fair Circassian*, whose appearance both in Paris and in London excited at the time so strong a sensation. She was noticed by the European ladies with much kindness; but the style in which our traveller now beheld her must have formed a sad contrast to what she had then experienced. When the poor creature, says Sir Robert, discerned, on approaching, my Frangy (European) appearance, she was riding forward to address me; but in a moment a rough fellow who was her conductor laid his whip over her shoulders, with so terrible an admonition into the bargain, that closing both her lips and her veil, she travelled on, doubtless with heavy recollections. To interfere in behalf of a woman so situated, would cast a sort of contamination on her, and only redouble her stripes.

SECTION IV.

CHARACTERS OF BEAUTY AMONG THE PERSIANS.

The Persians differ as much from us in their notions of beauty, as they do in those of taste. A large, soft and languishing black

eye constitutes with them the perfection of beauty, and diffuses an amorous softness over the whole countenance, infinitely superior to the piercing and ardent glance of majestic beauty. It is chiefly on this account that the women use the powder of antimony, which, although it adds to the vivacity of the eye, throws over it a kind of voluptuous languor, which makes it appear dissolving, as it were, in bliss. Thus the chief characters of beauty with them are eyes like the antelope's, a full-moon face, and the stature of the cypress; but there are secondary ones, which the poets are fond of celebrating. Ferdousee, in the *Shah Nameh*, thus describes the females of Touran:—"Their stature is tall, like that of the cypress, and the locks of their hair black as musk. Their cheeks are covered with roses, and their eyes full of languor; their lips are sweet as sugar, and fragrant as the rose."

"Hark, O moon!" exclaims Hafiz in his Odes; "fresh spouse of heaven; show not thyself above the horizon, for we this day behold the full moon of the face of my beloved!"

"Ah! how admirable is thy form! how delightful thy converse! thy charms and thy gentleness enchant my soul. Thy heart is as tender as the bud of the rose is fresh; thy beauty is equal to that of the cypress of the eternal garden!"

Djami describes the charms of Leilah, in these terms:—"Her figure was tall and elegant, and in her graceful gait she resembled the partridge of the mountains. Beautiful without the assistance of art, nature had given the most delicate rosy tinge to her cheeks, radiant with freshness; her eyebrow was like a delicate bow, formed of precious amber, and her eyelashes, like so many little darts of musk, pierced all hearts; her lips had the lustre of rubies without their hardness. Her enchanting smile displayed teeth as white as the purest pearls; you would imagine you beheld the bud of the rose gemmed with the tears of morning."

Many of the women of Persia are as fair as those of Europe, but confinement robs them of that lovely bloom so becoming and so essential to female beauty. The Persian women have a curious custom of making their eyebrows meet; and if this charm be denied them, they paint their forehead with a kind of preparation made for the purpose.

The Persian ladies not only dye their hair and eyebrows, but also stain their bodies with a variety of fantastic devices, not unfrequently with the figures of trees, birds, and beasts, sun, moon, and stars, as we read was the practice of our ancient British ancestors.

This sort of pencil-work spreads over the bosom, and continues down as low as the navel, round which some radiated

figure is generally painted. All this is displayed by the style of their dress, every garment of which, even to the light gauze chemise, is open from the neck to that point.

SECTION V.

COSTUME OF THE PERSIAN WOMEN.

The dress of the Persian females is simple, being composed of a much smaller number of garments than that of the European women. A Persian lady, when at home, does not load herself with clothes; and in her finery she seems to attach very little value to beauty of form. Very ample trowsers of thick velvet cover the whole of the lower part of the body down to the heels. Over these trowsers is worn a *peerahun* or chemise of muslin, silk or gauze, which is open in front nearly down to the waist, and buttons down the bosom by means of a number of loops and small buttons of silk, gold, or silver. Over the *peerahun* is generally fastened a girdle of skin, covered with cloth or silk, embroidered, and decorated with a plate of gold or silver, and precious stones. Such is the summer costume. The winter dress is the same, with the addition of a short upper garment resembling a jacket, and shawls in which the women wrap themselves as a protection from the cold. The covering for the feet is a kind of slipper, with a sole of ivory, metal, or some hard sort of wood.

When they leave the house, they put on a cloak which descends from the head to the feet, and their faces are concealed with oriental scrupulosity. The veil which they wear, is sometimes worked like a net, or else two holes are made in the cloak for their eyes. It is curious to see a number of tall and elegantly formed figures walking in the streets, and presenting nothing to your view but a pair of sparkling black eyes, which seem to enjoy the curiosity they excite. The veil seems to be essential to their virtue; for as long as they can conceal their face, they care not how much they expose the rest of their person. The women in Persia are the only people who wear jewels and use perfumes; and this is a privilege in which they take much delight.

The hair is almost always arranged in tresses, which fall down behind. That in front is cut short, and turned up from the forehead. On the sides, it descends in ringlets over the ears and cheeks. The ends of the tresses are adorned with pearls and clusters of precious stones, or ornaments of gold or silver. The bandeaux, diadems, and caps, vary in form according to the caprice of the inventor, or the taste of the wearer: they are more or less costly, according to the circumstances of

the individual. Shawls alike cover and adorn the head in a thousand different ways: they fall down the back over the shoulders, twist round the neck, or are fastened on the crown of the head, without any other rule than taste to determine their position.

The dress of women of the lower class has a rather dismal effect: it is commonly of a very dark brown colour. The trowsers, chemise, and veil, are of one and the same cloth. In this attire, the wearers always look as if they belonged to a funeral procession.



CHAPTER VIII.

OF CERTAIN HABITS OF THE PERSIANS.

OF all the habits of a Persian, the most common is that of smoking. Whether he is with his women, or in the *divan-kaneh*, in the company of his friends; whether he is going abroad or to court, he is never without his pipe, which fills the intervals of silence, relieves him from the fatigue of talking, and frequently causes him to be deemed more intelligent than he really is.

The Persian pipe, called *kallioun* or *narquilly*, is totally different from ours. It is shaped like a bottle terminated by the neck, at the top of which is a bowl for receiving the tobacco. The tube is attached to the bottom of this bowl, and frequently makes several windings in the bottle. The latter, which is of blown glass, has a curious appearance to a stranger: it is ornamented in the inside with representations of trees, flowers, and sometimes with small medallions. When the glass is just blown, these ornaments are fixed in the bottle with small pincers; and so neatly are the pieces joined together, as entirely to escape observation. A handsome *kallioun* costs, we are told, nearly fifty guineas.

To use this pipe, the bottle is filled with water, and the tobacco lighted. The smoke, after thus passing through the bottle, arrives at the mouth cool and disengaged from the coarser vapours.

The Peshkedmats are a class of servants who take charge of the smoking apparatus; and an excellent figure the man, his horse, and all the appendages of his office, make in one of their motley cavalcades. A couple of cylindrical leather cases are fastened on each side of his saddle, at the places usually destined for the holsters; one contains the *kallioun* with its tubes, &c. and the other the tobacco. On the left flank of the beast, and suspended by a chain long enough to clear the belly, hangs an



PERSIAN SMOKING.







GRANDEE SMOKING ON HORSEBACK.

iron pot with live charcoal, and as an opposite pendant we see a large leather bottle, holding water—fire and water being essentials to the enjoyment of the *kallioun*. The attendant must be ready to serve the *kallioun* instantly at the call of the master. Some use the common wooden tubes; but others, more luxurious, have one that is pliable, winding like a snake several feet in length. It is attached to the conducting tube, which being held by the servant, enables him to attend in his duty and yet keep a respectful distance in his master's rear. The opposite plate represents a grandee smoking on horseback, and attended by a servant on foot.

It cannot be denied, that the incessant use of tobacco renders the people of the East thin and emaciated: this they themselves admit; but the power of habit is stronger than regard for their health. Abbas the Great was desirous of correcting this pernicious custom. One gala-day, he provided pipes ready filled, and ordered them to be handed to the courtiers. From time to time the king inquired how they liked this new sort of tobacco, which, he said, had been sent to him by one of his ministers. They all declared that it was excellent. At length he put the same question to the chief officer of his guards, a man bred in camps, and who was unaccustomed to the polite but frequently false language of courts. "Sire," replied the officer, "I swear by your head that it smells like dung."—"Cursed be the drug," cried Abbas, turning to his courtiers, "which cannot be distinguished from horse-dung!" It was in fact that substance, dried and broken small, with which he had caused the pipes to be filled.

The use of wine, it is well known, is forbidden by the Mahometan religion. In spite of the prohibition, many of the Persian monarchs of the Sofy dynasty, as Abbas II. and Sefy III. did not scruple to drink wine in public, even to intoxication, in which state they committed the most atrocious excesses. Charadin speaks of a visir to the former of these sovereigns, who, every night on returning home from the palace, looked at himself in the glass with surprise, and felt his head with his hands to make sure that it was still on his shoulders. One evening, his forebodings were realized, for it was no longer in its place. The reigning family of the Cadjars, however, are strict observers of this point of the law of Mahomet, which they enforce both by precept and example. Kotzebue relates an adventure of a khan at Teheran, who was so lax in his observance of it, that his conduct reached the ears of the king. His majesty at first reproved him in strong terms for his immorality, but as this had no effect, he commanded the khan to continue drinking. This order the latter so faithfully obeyed, that he remained in a state of

intoxication forty days, by which time he became so disgusted with the practice, that he begged the king to revoke his command.

Notwithstanding the example set by the court, drinking to intoxication seems to be no uncommon vice among the Persians. Mr. Morier informs us, that when they wish to have a debauch, instead of sitting down to it in the evening, as is customary in Europe, they rise early and esteem the morning the best time for beginning to drink wine; by which means they have the whole day before them, and carry on their excess until night. He once saw a party seated not far from the road, in the open air, and apparently much intoxicated, by seven o'clock in the morning.

It is worthy of remark, that the nations, not excepting the most savage, to which the use of wine is unknown, have liquors or preparations which serve as substitutes for that beverage.

Thus the pious Musulmans, though they abstain from wine, intoxicate themselves with the poppy. From this plant they make various preparations, the most common of which, called *hashem-begui*, is the juice of the poppy made up into pills. They begin with taking a pill of the size of a hemp-seed, and gradually increase it till it is as large as a pea. At this quantity they are obliged to stop, or the dose would be fatal. To this preparation the Persians attribute virtues which make them extremely fond of it. According to them, it places agreeable visions before the mind, and produces a sort of enchantment. It is remarked, that those who make use of it manifest, after a certain time, an uncommon flow of spirits; on the cessation of which, the body becomes cold, and the mind sullen and stupid; sleep commonly ensues, and puts an end to this species of intoxication.



CHAPTER IX.

SUPERSTITION OF THE PERSIANS.

THE Persians are perhaps the most superstitious nation in Asia. Among them, the remnants of ancient superstitions are not confined to the vulgar, as they are with us: even the present king will not leave his capital, undertake any expedition, or receive an ambassador, till he has had intimation from his astrologer of the fortunate hour for the act. Before all minor transactions, the people in general take what they call a *fal*; namely, in the old fashion of dipping into Virgil, opening the Koran, Hafiz, or any venerated author, and governing their actions by

the first passage on which their eyes chance to fall. They put great faith in the virtue of charms, which they buy of the learned in the stars, and bind not merely about their own persons, but those of their horses: some are composed of prayers sewed up in morsels of linen, in various shapes, such as lozenges, circles, and triangles. The more costly amulets are certain sentences from the Koran, exquisitely engraved on cornelian, and which are usually worn by persons of rank, round the neck or arms. The lower orders have talismans to avert the influence of evil eyes, curses, and the like; in short, they neither look, move, nor speak, without attention to some occult fatality or other.

Sir Robert Porter informs us, that in the course of his journey, several peasants, hearing of his destination and wishing to travel that way, begged to be admitted to the protection of his company, on account of the unsafe state of the roads. The request was granted, and the men mounted their horses; but just at the moment of setting out, one of these strangers happened to sneeze. This dreadful omen suddenly stopped the whole party; it was a sign foreboding evil, and no arguments could prevail on them to move on that day.

Another species of superstition very common among the Persians, is the faith they have in a charm called the *dum*, or breath, which, they say, secures them against the bite of snakes and the sting of scorpions; and the courage with which those who are supposed to possess it encounter those reptiles, is remarkable. Among the servants who accompanied the British embassy with Mr. Morier, one or two had this charm: whenever a snake or a scorpion was found, they were immediately called to seize it. The *ferash-bashi*, or chief of the tent-pitchers, was remarkable for his prowess in such encounters. I saw him one day, says the above-mentioned traveller, seize a snake with his naked hand, but the animal turned upon him, bit him, and hung upon him till blood came. The snake was not venomous, and therefore perhaps he seized it with confidence.

Not long before Mr. Morier was at Shiraz, there lived in that city a man greatly celebrated for his sanctity, who had the reputation of possessing the *dum* to such a degree, that he communicated it to his disciples, who again dispensed it to the multitude. A young mirza, brother to the then acting visir of Shiraz, gave to the British ambassador, as a great present, a knife, which he said had been charmed by this holy man, and if rubbed over the bite of a snake, would instantly cure it. One of his disciples was at Shiraz while we were there, says Mr. Morier, and he willingly complied with our request, that he would communicate his charm to us. The operation was simple enough. From his pocket he took a piece of sugar, over which he mum-

bled some words, breathed upon it, and then required that we should eat it, in full belief that neither serpent nor scorpion could ever more harm us. He then pulled some snakes out of a bag, which some of us, whose confidence was strong, ventured to handle and flourish in the air.

Mr. Scott Waring relates the following fact, which fell under his own observation:—I had a servant called Ali Beg, who possessed this gift of the *dum*, and the stories they told me of him I invariably treated with the greatest ridicule. Mr. Bruce told me that he saw him catch two snakes, one of which bit him so violently as to leave two of his teeth in the wound. This was easily reconciled; the snake was not poisonous. Some time after I was at Shiraz, a very large scorpion was found under my bed. Ali Beg was called, and he certainly took up the scorpion without the least hesitation. I saw the animal strike his sting repeatedly into the man's flesh, and he persisted that he felt no pain. I asked the other servants to do the same, but they refused: and the next morning, when I examined the man's hand, there was not the smallest sign of its having been stung. How he escaped feeling any inconvenience, it is impossible for me to guess, as I am confident he had not time to make any preparation, nor did he use any antidote against the effects of the sting: at the same time, it would be truly ridiculous to assign the same cause for this escape as is most conscientiously believed by the Persians.

Mr. Morier mentions, that in travelling over the desert between Koom and Teheran, the Persians in the suite of the ambassador expressed considerable apprehensions of the *goule*, an imaginary species of land mermaid, which they affirm entices the traveller by its cries and then tears him in pieces with its claws. They say that the *goule* possesses the faculty of changing itself into different shapes and colours, that it sometimes comes in the form of a camel, at others as a cow or a horse; and when on a sudden, continues the writer just quoted, we had discovered something on the horizon of the desert which we could not define, all the Persians at once exclaimed that it was a *goule*. Our spying-glasses, however, proved it to be the stump of a high reed, which some of the Persians still thought might be an artifice of the dreaded animal. With the gravest faces they assured our countrymen, that many had seen *goules* in crossing this desert, and acquainted us with the spells by which they had kept them at a distance, the most efficacious of which they said was loosening the string of their *shalwars*, or riding-trowsers.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PERSIANS CALCULATE AND SPEND THEIR TIME.

THE Persians have no other guide for the division of time, than the sun. They delight in our watches, particularly if they get them for nothing : their curiosity, however, soon spoils them. They have a story, says a late traveller, of an inhabitant of Tungsteer, to the southward of Bushire, finding a watch which some one had dropped. He held it in his hand till he heard it beating, which he thought very extraordinary, as it neither walked nor moved. He put it to his ear, and heard it more distinctly. After considering some time, he cried out : " Wretch, where are you ? come out ! " and threw it in a passion on the ground. The watch still went : he then very deliberately took up a large stone, and dashed it to pieces. The noise ceased, and congratulating himself upon it, he exclaimed : " Aha ! have I killed you ? "

They divide the day into three parts ; from sun-rise to noon ; from noon till three o'clock ; and from three till sunset. Thus if you ask what time it is, a Persian will tell you how many hours have elapsed since sun-rise, or mid-day. The *muezzin* who summons the people to prayers, proclaims the arrival of noon ; but as he waits till the shadow has traversed the whole length of the meridian, he is frequently an hour later than the real time.

The months are lunar, and the days are reckoned from sun-set to sun-set. The almanacs in general are repositories of superstition, filled with indications of lucky and unlucky hours, and astrological predictions. Owing to this defective method of computing time, the Persians cannot reckon beyond a month, since their computations are regulated by the phases of the moon alone. If therefore you question them concerning their age, it would be as difficult for them to answer your inquiry as to resolve a problem of Euclid.

A Persian, of what condition soever, rises as soon as it is light, and performs his morning devotions. Then comes the *nachtah*, or breakfast, which consists of grapes and other kinds of fruit that are in season, cheese and goat's milk, and finishes with a cup of very strong coffee. The artisan then goes to his master's and begins his work, the tradesman applies to business ; the great man repairs to his *divan-kaneh*, or the apartment in which he receives company, and while smoking his *kallioun*, chats with his inferiors or visitors : gives directions relative to

his domestic affairs ; adjusts the quarrels or listens to the reports of his dependants. At nine o'clock he visits the prince or the governor. At noon, he returns to the *divan-kaneh*, where he takes his *tchacht* or dinner, usually consisting of bread, cheese, butter, and different sorts of fruit. After dinner, he says his noontide prayers, and retires to the inner apartments to enjoy the society of his women. At three o'clock, he goes abroad to pay visits, or receives visitors at home. At four, he recites the afternoon prayer. When night comes on, his carpet is spread in the open air, and he prepares to spend the evening in the company of his friends or dependants. They converse upon the events of the day, or the news of the court ; they relate extraordinary adventures, for the Orientals are admirable story-tellers, or repeat passages of the most eminent poets. The hour for the fourth prayer arrives, but without causing the slightest interruption in the conversation. Each rises in turn, goes to a corner of the room, places himself on a small carpet with his face turned towards Mecca, and performs this religious duty with much greater despatch than devotion. Such indeed is their precipitation, that the duty of prayer seems to be quite as irksome as it is indispensable. At ten o'clock, a servant announces that supper, *shamee*, is ready : at the same time, he brings with him a ewer of water ; each of the party washes his hands ; and they then seat themselves round the tray on which the dishes are placed. Eleven o'clock usually breaks up the company, and puts an end to the occupations of the day.

The time which a person of distinction passes at court, or in his *divan-kaneh*, the tradesman devotes to business. He has commonly a shop at the bazar, where he exhibits his commodities, makes bargains, and carries on all his traffic.

Besides the four prayers enjoined by religion, there is a fifth or night-prayer, which, however, is more frequently omitted than observed.



CHAPTER XI.

VISITS AND ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE PERSIANS.

THE Persians are too much addicted to etiquette and ceremony, not to be fond of visiting. The dependant would not on any account allow a day to pass without paying his respects to his patron, the courtier without presenting himself before the sovereign, and friends without mutually visiting one another.

The ceremonies and compliments differ with the rank of the

visitor. If an inferior is honoured with a visit from his superior, he does not sit down till the latter is seated, nor rise till he has risen. The master of the house commonly occupies the upper end of the cushion or carpet; but if he wishes to do honour to the stranger, he gives up his place to him or makes him take a seat by his side.

When the master of the house is of higher rank than his visitor, the latter softly slips into the *divan-kaneh*, takes the first vacant place, and there stands with his hands crossed over his girdle, his head somewhat inclining forward and his eyes fixed: and in this grave attitude he continues till the host invites him to be seated.

There exists a kind of etiquette in regard to the manner of sitting, which every well-bred person must observe. Thus before his superior he squats on his heels, keeping his knees and his feet close together; in the presence of his equals he sits down cross-legged, with his body erect; and in any company whatever, it is deemed extremely rude to suffer the extremities of the feet to be seen when seated: they ought to be covered with the robe.

A visit between persons of distinction and of equal rank consists of three acts. In the first the visitor is furnished with a *kallioun* or pipe, the smoke of which is cooled by water, and a cup of very strong coffee without sugar. In the second another *kallioun* is given with *sweet* coffee, so called because it is composed of rose-water and sugar. A fresh *kallioun*, sweetmeats and sherbet, make up the third act.

These sweetmeats are generally brought on silver, plated or japanned trays, adorned with painted flowers or other ornaments: they usually consist of sugar-almonds and pistachionuts, or small orange-flower cakes. The Persians are passionately fond of sweetmeats, and excel in the art of making them.

The manner in which the Persians take their meals, is totally different from ours: they are strangers to the use of tables, knives and forks; and such is the power of habit, that articles with which we cannot dispense are to them most troublesome and inconvenient. Thus Abu Taleb, in the narrative of his travels in Europe, complains bitterly more than once of the necessity of eating with a knife and fork.

The method of proceeding at a Persian entertainment, will be best explained by the descriptions of some recent travellers.

At an entertainment given to Sir Robert Porter by Mirza Bezoork, minister to the prince-royal, the routine was as follows:—

The whole company being seated in the eastern style cross-legged, in an extensive saloon, carpeted all over, and with the

usual accompaniments of *nummuds*, which are long, narrow pieces of a thicker and softer substance made of wool or felt, *kalliouns* were presented, and then coffee served in very small cups without cream or sugar. *Kalliouns* succeeded; then tea in larger cups; and this over, conversation filled an interval of ten minutes, when the minister gave a signal for dinner to be brought. Several servants immediately entered, bearing a long narrow roll of flowered cotton, which they laid down and spread before the whole company, who now occupied both sides of the room. This napery was placed close to our knees. The next service was, to set a piece of a thin sort of bread or cake before each guest, to be used as a plate and napkin. Then came a tray between every two persons, containing two bowls of sherbet, each provided with a wooden spoon of delicate and elegant workmanship; a couple of dishes of pillau, composed of rice soaked in oil or butter, boiled fowls, raisins, and a little saffron; two plates, with melons sliced; two others, containing a dozen *kabbobs*, or morsels of dry broiled meat; and a dish presenting a fowl roasted to a cinder. The whole party being in like manner supplied, the host gave the sign for falling to; a command that seemed to be well understood, for every back became bent, every face was brought close to the point of attack, and every jaw was in motion in an instant. This is done by a marvellous dexterity in gathering up the rice, or victuals of any kind, with the right hand, and almost at the same moment thrusting it into the mouth. The left hand is never used by the Persians, but in the humblest offices; however, during meals at least, the honoured member certainly does the business of two, for no cessation could be observed in the active passage of meat, melon, sherbet, &c. from the board to the mouths of the grave and distinguished assembly. I must say, I never saw a more silent repast in my life, nor one where the sounds of mastication were so audible. I could only think of a range of respectable quadrupeds, with their heads not farther from the troughs than ours were from the trays. For my part, whenever I wished to avail myself of the heaps of provender on mine, at every attempt to throw a little rice into my mouth, it disappeared up my sleeve; so that after several unsuccessful essays, I gave up the enjoyment of this most savoury dish of the feast, and contented myself with a dry *kabbob* or two.

When the servant cleared away, it was in the order the things had been put down. A silver-plated jug with a long spout, accompanied by a basin of the same metal, was carried round to every guest by an attendant, who poured water from the jug on our right hands, which we held in succession over the basin, while each individual cleansed his beard or mustachios from the

remnants of dinner. We had no towel to dry one or the other, save our own pocket-handkerchiefs; the bread-napkin or plate having no capability but to be eaten off, and wipe the ends of the fingers between every new plunge into the opposite dish. A *kallioun* with tea followed, and continued with few interruptions during the conversation which had broken the dead silence, on the departure of the rolled-up web and its appendages. A fresh *kallioun* finished the entertainment, and we then rose to take our leave. With extreme difficulty I obeyed the general movement; but when I did get upon my legs, they were too cramped to stand, and had it not been for the support of one of my countrymen, more accustomed to such curvature of limbs, I must have fallen. A few minutes, however, restored me to locomotion; and having made my bow, we passed through the curtain entrance, to resume the slippers we had left at the door.

At a dinner given by the Ameen-ed-Dowlah to Sir Gore Ouseley, that gentleman and his suite enjoyed better fortune, but at the expense of the native guests. An attempt was made to lay out the entertainment in the European manner. On a number of rude unpainted tables, some high, some low, arranged in the horse-shoe fashion, were heaped all the various dishes which compose a Persian feast, not in symmetrical order, for their number made that impossible, but positively piled one upon another; so that stewed fowl lay under roasted lamb, omelet under stewed fowl, eggs under omelet, rice under all, and so on. Every European was provided with knife, fork, napkin and plate: but the poor Persians made rueful work of it. Some were seated upon chairs so high, that they towered far above the alpine scenery of meats and stews: others again were seated so low, that they were lost in the valleys, their mouths being brought to about the level of the table. When a Persian eats his dinner in his ordinary way, the dishes are placed on the ground before him, and crouching himself down, he brings his mouth so close to them as commodiously to transfer the victuals from the dish to his mouth: but here, his mouth being placed at a great distance from the good things, and his fingers being the only medium of communication between both, their commerce was but slow and uncertain. There was much amusement in observing how awkwardly they went to work, and the indignation expressed in the faces of the most ravenous, who, out of compliment to the British guests, were deprived of their full range over such a scene of good cheer.

Kotzebue has given a humorous account of the manner in which the gentlemen of the Russian embassy were entertained by the serdar of Erivan. After describing the preliminary arrangements, he thus proceeds:—

I shall only mention the things on the table which stood opposite to Dr. Müller and myself; from these, some idea may be formed of the other dishes. First came a large pancake, which not only covered the whole table, but hung over it on all sides nearly half a yard deep; it is called *tshurek*, and serves the Persians both for bread and napkin: then half a sheep, the leg of an ox, two dishes filled with various roasted meats, five dishes of ragouts sprinkled with saffron, two dishes of boiled rice, two of boiled fowls, two of roast fowls, two roasted geese, two dishes of fish, two bowls of sour milk, a large quantity of sherbet, and four jars of wine; but with all these there was neither knife, fork, nor spoon. One dish was piled upon another with such rapidity, that Dr. Müller and myself suddenly found ourselves stationed behind an entrenchment of viands which concealed all view of the court, and only allowed us a peep at our friends opposite through the interstices of the multiplied dishes.

Through one of these openings, I endeavoured to observe what the serdar was doing. With his left hand resting on his dagger, for the Persians never eat with the left, he gravely stretched out his right into a dish of greasy rice, of which he kneaded a small portion with three fingers, and conveyed it with great address into his mouth, seldom soiling either his beard or his mustachios. After repeating this operation several times, he broke a piece off the enormous pancake, and having wiped his fingers with it, swallowed it with an air of placid satisfaction. In the same manner, he poked into a variety of dishes which he fancied; and at last, seizing a goblet of sherbet, and drinking it off, smiled around upon his wondering guests. Scarcely any of the party had tasted any of the dishes, from the impossibility of getting at them; for not one of them could have been removed from the middle, without demolishing the structure of the whole. The signal for clearing the tables was at last given, and the removal of the dishes occasioned some curious scenes. The dish of ragouts could not be separated from the plate of sour cream, upon which it so conveniently reposed; the butter had entered into close alliance with the pancake; and the fish would not dissolve partnership with the roasted fowls. Force, however, succeeded at last in effecting the desired separation, and the eatables were delivered up to the persons waiting outside. It is the custom in Persia to give the remains of a feast to the attendants, or such persons as may happen to be in the way; often also to the gaping populace. Thus, in a great house, where they daily cook treble the quantity consumed by its inmates, the leavings are consigned to hungry amateurs.

At another entertainment given at Sultania, by the prime minister, to the Russian ambassador and his suite, we are told by

the same traveller, that a mound of earth had been raised in the middle of a tent, as a substitute for a table, but so very high, says he, that we could but just see the noses of those who sat opposite to us. This table, which was of immense breadth, was covered with different sorts of dishes and fruit. In the middle a narrow space had been left open, and I could not imagine for what purpose, until, when we were seated, I saw the servants jump upon the table, and stand there, handing round such dishes as might be agreeable to us. I would have given much to be allowed to laugh heartily; but we were obliged to repress our risibility. One of the men, however, having stepped into a dish of sour milk, and his neighbour having, in the attempt to relieve him, nearly fallen over another dish, it was no longer possible to refrain from laughing outright; and luckily the conversation of the ambassador and the minister, who did not observe the accident, having turned upon a circumstance of a ridiculous nature, our laughter could not excite particular observation. The clumsy servant modestly withdrew, leaving the marks of his footsteps on the table. Besides this awkward mode of waiting, which must have been unpleasant to the servants themselves, others had to stand behind us and keep off the flies with large straw fans.

The minister then sent to several gentlemen *bonnes bouches* from his own plate, which is considered the highest honour that a person of distinction can show to a foreign guest. With the Persians that degree of ceremony is dispensed with: he throws the food at once into their mouths, and they evince much dexterity in catching it. Should a great man happen to take a liking to his neighbour, he nicely kneads a portion of greasy rice with three fingers into a lump, and with a condescending smile conveys it into the mouth open to receive the honour.

The silence which prevails during a genuine Persian repast, is a circumstance that does not fail to strike a European. Here is no clatter of plates, knives and forks; no noise caused by servants, or the drinking of healths; no interruption is given to the main business, the satisfaction of the cravings of appetite, by the laughter excited by some humorous sally. Many entertainments are succeeded by the exhibitions of hired dancers and music.

Unlike the Europeans, the Persian does not keep his doors shut at meal times. He would think himself deficient in his duty to God, did he not spread the table of his bounty for all; every one may share what he has, without his ever being displeased on account of the number of his guests. As he is temperate, his provision plentiful, and he never reserves any thing for another day, there is always sufficient to satisfy every appetite. This virtue is common to all the nations of the East.

Abraham, say they, never ate alone ; and they relate that his fortunate meeting with the three angels who shared his repast took place one day when, being by himself, the hospitable patriarch had gone forth from his tent in search of guests.



CHAPTER XII.

AMUSEMENTS AND EXERCISES.

SECTION I.

AMUSEMENTS.

THE opinions of the Musulmans in general respecting music and dancing, tend much to contract the circle of their amusements. They are strangers alike to the pleasures of the ball, the concert, theatrical exhibitions, and those sports in which the assembled youth of both sexes indulge the flow of gaiety natural to their time of life. Their disposition, on the contrary, is grave and taciturn ; and though the Persian may possess polished manners, extensive information, and a memory well stored with anecdotes, yet his cheerfulness is never brisk and animated like ours.

Conversation is a favourite recreation of the Persians : they season it with stories, in which the fertility of their imagination is strikingly displayed ; they enliven it by literary discussions ; they diversify it with the recitation of the finest passages of their best poets ; and they frequently prolong it, taking no note of time, which meanwhile glides swiftly away, till the night is very far advanced.

Several grandees keep for their amusement a number of young Georgians who can sing, play on different instruments, and perform feats of tumbling and agility. Persons of inferior rank employ hired musicians and dancers. Besides these, there is a class of people called *Looties*, who go from house to house, amusing their auditors with relating numberless stories, either true or fictitious, but always grossly indecent. They also perform a variety of tricks, similar to those of our jugglers and tumblers.

Though they have no theatre, the Persians are not without a species of dramatic exhibition. There are persons who recite and act passages of the Shah Nameh of Ferdousee, such as the battle between Roustam and Sohrab, and between the same hero and Isfendiar.

In summer, when the approach of night terminates the labours of the villagers, they assemble around a fountain or on the margin of a stream, spread their mats, and highly enjoy the supreme delight of breathing a fresh and pure air. To the Persian, there is no enjoyment equal to this: yet there are other amusements which enliven the village circle, and banish from it lassitude and care. Sometimes an itinerant bard charms his auditors with the recital of the loves of Medjnoun and Leilah; at others, a *kisseh-kon*, or story-teller, declaims the history of the heroes of Persia. Here, a dervise edifies his hearers with a delineation of the virtues, misfortunes, and miracles of Ali and his family; there, the *reisi-deh*, or village bailiff, relates the history of the great men of the province, and considers the motionless attitude, the fixed gaze, the stupefaction of his auditory, as the most flattering tribute to his rustic eloquence. In another place, a *mollah*, at once a minister of religion and a priest of the muses, repeats, with due emphasis, pieces from the *Gulistan* of Saadi, or the *Divan* of Hafiz; while a few paces distant, a buffoon, by his sallies, or a juggler by his tricks, excites the laughter and admiration of the junior classes.

When night has shrouded the earth, and its refreshing coolness has succeeded the heat of day, the villagers join in the dance, accompanied by instruments: each person frisking about and following the measure more or less closely, according as his or her ear is more or less correct. At other times, the peasants remain spectators, and leave the exercise to troops of dancers of both sexes who stroll about the country.

SECTION II.

EXERCISES.

The exercises of the Persians consist in shooting with the bow, managing the sabre, and playing at *jureed-bazee*, a game very common among the military men. It is played in the following manner.

A number of men on horseback, each armed with a *jureed*, or dart, three cubits long, divide into two opposite troops. Two or three gallop away from their troop, and are pursued by the like number of the other party, who throw the *jureed* at them while going at full speed. The person at whom the *jureed* is thrown, either catches it in his hand, or slipping under the horse's belly allows it to fly over him. This feat, which is by no means easy, at the rate the horse is going, they perform very expertly. The *jureed* comes with sufficient force to break an arm. They also

amuse themselves with riding at full speed, throwing the *jureed* on the ground, and catching it as it rebounds.

The king's cavalry are also trained to an exercise called the *keykaj*, which consists in turning about on the saddle at full speed and firing a carbine backward. This they learn from their childhood, and it gives them great confidence and dexterity on horseback. It is probably a remnant of the old Parthian custom so frequently alluded to in ancient authors; with this difference, that fire-arms are now used instead of bows and arrows.

The modern exercise of the bow is likewise performed on horseback. The horseman gallops away with a bow and arrow in his hand, and when he has reached a certain point, he inclines either to the right hand or left, and discharges his arrow, which, to win the prize, must hit a cup fixed at the top of a pole one hundred and twenty feet high.

Another species of exercise, which seems to be less cultivated than the preceding, is thus mentioned by Kotzebue:—When the review was ended, the master of the horse came forward, standing upon a wild Arabian, and turned himself round while the horse was bounding about in every direction at full speed, not in the measured canter of our riding-schools. Sometimes he would suspend himself by either foot, while his head and arms hung down to the ground; then swinging himself on the horse, he would stand in the saddle upon both legs or one: in short, he went through a great variety of feats, the sight of which was really alarming. This man's performances certainly surpassed any thing of the kind that I had ever witnessed in my own country: and when the minister asked my opinion of them, I assured him that we had nothing equal to them in Russia. "And yet," added he, "this is not our best tumbler; the best is sick." I did not, however, give much credit to this assertion: and I afterwards learned that this man was the only performer at the king's court, and indeed superior to any in Persia.

The game of the mall is also known to the Persians, who play at it on horseback. At the extremity of the place appropriated to this exercise, there are two posts which serve for a wicket. The ball is thrown down in the middle of the place, when the players, provided with a short stick, pursue and strike it while going at a gallop, and endeavour to drive it between the two posts.

Scarcely any but people of superior rank play at these games, in which they display great skill as well in the sport itself as in riding.

In many cities of Persia, particularly at Shiraz, there are

houses called *zour-kaneh*, where bodily exercises are practised. They may be compared with the gymnasiums of the ancients. The *zour-kaneh* consists of a room, the floor of which is sunk two feet below the level of the soil. They have no air or light, but what is admitted at small apertures in the dome; and hence, it is unwholesome to remain long in them. A broad smooth terrace is the arena where the exercises are performed, while the spectators and musicians are stationed in a kind of boxes or rather niches.

Niebuhr, who visited these gymnasiums, gives a faithful description of their different kinds of exercises, all of which are designed to develope the physical powers and natural dexterity. The champions enter the arena stark naked, with the exception of a pair of light drawers. They begin with a short prayer and prostration, for the Musulman never engages in any thing, not even amusement, without praying. Having performed this duty, some extend themselves at full length, but without allowing the belly to touch the ground, and in this posture describe a circle with the head, yet without stirring either hands or feet, by which they are supported. Others take thick wooden clubs, about a foot and a half long, and cut into the shape of pears, place one on each shoulder, brandish them about in cadence with the music, at the same time stamping with their feet, and continuing this exercise for half an hour. These stand on their hands, with their heels in the air, and leap up by a plank set against the wall, or even without the assistance of the plank; those dance to the sound of lively music, sometimes turning round, sometimes leaning against the wall, sometimes standing on one hand, sometimes on the other. Some lie down on their backs with cushions under the head and arms, and raise in cadence heavy pieces of wood; while others, standing upright, shake their bodies in every direction, up, down, forward and backward. These postures are varied to infinity, and they are generally succeeded by wrestling. The combatants never try their strength, till they have paid each other a thousand compliments. They first clap their hands one against another, then cross them over their foreheads; they next lie down on the ground, each seeking the means of attacking his antagonist to the greatest advantage. The contest is thus prolonged till the victory is decided, and the vanquished party kisses the hand of the conqueror. When the champion has beaten all his adversaries, he solicits some donation of the spectators. If he can prove that he has overcome the most eminent champions of the great cities, he has a right to have a lion placed on his tomb.

These violent exercises cause, as may be supposed, a profuse perspiration; there are, therefore, persons always in attendance

at the *zour-kanch*, who, for a gratuity, rub those who resort thither to practise, compressing the muscles and stretching the joints, all in cadence.

These gymnasiums, like those of antiquity, have each their gymnasiarch, who is called *pehlevan*, hero. Superior strength, skill, and dexterity, are the qualifications for this office. The *pehlevan* must have vanquished all competitors in the different exercises. He is then invested with the superintendence over them, adjudges the victory, encourages emulation, keeps good order, and in eloquent harangues, in which the names of Ali and Hossein frequently occur, he reminds them of the good humour, friendship and respect, which, though rivals, they ought mutually to show to each other.

SECTION III.

HUNTING, FIELD-SPORTS, AND HORSE-RACING.

The Persians are passionately fond of the chase; it is an exercise to which they are addicted from their youth, and in which they excel. All the people of distinction keep falcons, sparrow-hawks, and other birds of prey, for sporting. In Chardin's time, the hunting establishment of the sovereign contained eight hundred of those birds. Upon the whole, the Persians make but little use of dogs in hunting, considering them as the most impure of animals; hence they employ birds in their stead.

They have brought their hawks to a great degree of docility, particularly one class which they call the *churkh*, and which is trained to catch antelopes. It is hunted with in this manner:—When a herd of deer is discovered, one is separated from the rest by the dogs, and the bird, being let loose, almost immediately pounces upon it, flapping its wings over the eyes of the antelope. The animal endeavours to rid itself of the *churkh*, by beating its head against the ground; but as the bird is perched on the upper part of the head, this attempt is of no avail. As the antelope stops the instant the *churkh* pounces on it, the dogs soon come up to secure their prey. One of these birds will kill two, seldom three antelopes in a day. This manner of catching deer affords much amusement.

The *churkh* is reared with infinite pains and trouble. Fryer calls this bird the Muscovy hawk, and says that in his time one of them cost from one hundred to four hundred pounds. If it has not been well attended to, and taken the usual medicines, it becomes lazy, and often flies away. There are different kinds of hawks for catching partridges, quails, pigeons, and other me.

The wild ass is sometimes hunted, though rarely, on account of its very great speed. Whenever it is, horses are stationed in places where it is most likely to run; and by continually changing horses, the hunter sometimes overtakes this surprisingly fleet animal.

The Persians delight in keeping fighting rams. A more bloody or cruel conflict can scarcely be witnessed, than two of these furious animals engaging each other. On these occasions, the passions of the Persians are worked up to the highest pitch; and it often happens, that a quarrel among the men succeeds a battle between the beasts.

Near Khoi are to be seen two pillars, called *kelleh minar*, or pillars of skulls, which are the memorials of an extraordinary hunt of Shah Ismael, who is said to have killed in one day a multitude of wild goats, the heads and horns of which were arranged round two massive pillars of brick, where they still remain. Some, less credulous, affirm that these heads were the produce of the sport of a year, which seems much more probable; though it is allowed, that the flocks of goats and antelopes on the mountains to the northward of Khoi are more numerous than it is easy to conceive. Another singularity belonging to these pillars is, that they are thrown considerably from their perpendicular, and the next strong earthquake will most likely complete their fall.

Quails abound in some parts of Persia. This bird the Persians hunt in a very curious and successful manner. They stick two poles in their girdle, and place upon them either their outer coat or a pair of trowsers, which are intended to look at a distance like the horns of an animal. They then with a hand-net prowls about the fields; and the quail, seeing a form more like a beast than a man, permits the hunter to approach so near that he can throw his net over it. The rapidity with which the Persians catch quails in this manner, is truly astonishing. Mr. Morier says, that in one of his rambles with a gun, he met a shepherd-boy, who, laughing at the few birds he had killed, erected his horns and presently caught more birds alive than he had shot.

The horse-races of the Persians are very different from ours. The horses start at the distance of perhaps fifteen miles, and pursue a direct course to the post. No care is taken to level the ground; and as it often happens that more than twenty horses start together, there are frequent accidents. Purses of gold are given to the first, second, and third horses. They take great pains in training their horses, which they do for a much longer time than is practised in Europe.

The Persian horses never exceed fourteen or fourteen and a

half hands ; but upon the whole, they are taller than the Arabian. Those of the desert and country about Hillah run very small, but are full of bone and very swift. It is the practice to feed and water them only at sun-rise and sun-set, when they are cleaned. Their usual provender is barley and chopped straw ; hay is a kind of food not known here. The bedding of the animal consists of his dung, after it has been carefully exposed to the drying effect of the sun during the day ; it then becomes quite pulverized, and in that state is nightly spread under him. Little of it touches his body, which is covered by his clothing, a large *numnud*, from the ears to the tail, and bound firmly round his belly by a very long surcingle. But this apparel is only for cold weather ; the night-clothes are of a lighter substance in the warmer season, and during the heat of the day the animal is kept entirely in the shade. At night, he is tied in the courtyard ; his head being attached to the place of security by a double rope from the halter, while the hinder legs are confined by cords of twisted hair, fastened to iron rings and pegs driven into the earth. These precautions are used to prevent them from attacking and maiming each other, the whole stud generally consisting of stallions. Their keepers also sleep on their rugs among them, in case of such accidents ; and sometimes, notwithstanding all their care, the animals contrive to break loose, and a combat ensues. A general neighing, screaming, kicking and snorting, soon rouse the grooms, and the scene for a while is terrible : indeed no one can conceive the sudden uproar of such a moment, who has not been in the eastern countries to hear it. They seize, bite, and kick each other with the most determined fury, and frequently cannot be separated before their heads and haunches stream with blood. Even in skirmishes between the natives, their horses take part in the fray, tearing each other with their teeth, while their masters are at close quarters on their backs.

The Turcoman breed of horses is preferable to the pure Persian race ; they are of a larger size, commonly standing from fifteen to sixteen hands high ; they have considerably the advantage in bone, are inexhaustible under fatigue, and their powers of speed are very great. A fine pure-blooded horse from Turcomania is worth two or three hundred *toomauns*.

SECTION IV.

GAMES.

The Mahometan religion interdicts games of chance, and the police fines those who transgress this prohibition : the Persians, nevertheless, pay but little attention to this precept. They can-

not, however, be charged with a particular fondness for gambling, which they never pursue to excess.

The Persians are acquainted with tennis and dice; the game of backgammon is common among them, but they know little of chess. Their cards, called *kandjafeh*, are of wood, ninety in number; they are very cleverly painted, and marked with eight colours. They have also a game which is very common in Turkey, by the name of *mangala*.

Most of these games are confined to the lowest classes of the people. The priests hold persons who play, especially if for money, in little estimation, and believe that they will suffer in a future world for these acts of impiety.



CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE HOUSES OF THE PERSIANS.

NOTHING can have a duller appearance than a Persian city. Most of the houses are built of bricks baked in the sun, and covered with a plaster made of mud and chopped straw; so that a stranger would conceive them to be wholly constructed of earth.

Mr. Morier, speaking of Ispahan, says: In forming his idea of this city, let not the reader bring it in comparison with any of the capitals of Europe. Here are no long or broad streets, no architectural beauties, and few monuments of private wealth or public munificence. At Ispahan, (and it is nearly the same in all despotic countries) the interior of houses is much better than their exterior would indicate. Indeed, where scarcely any thing of the house is seen from the street, but a dead wall, as is the case with the generality of Persian houses, there is not much room for exterior ornament. The constant succession of walls unenlivened by windows, gives a character of mystery to their dull streets, which is greatly heightened by now and then observing the women, through the small apertures made in the wall, stealing a look at the passengers below.

The entrances to the houses from the street are generally mean and low. A poor man's door is scarcely three feet in height; and this is a precautionary measure, to hinder the servants of the great from entering it on horseback, which, when any act of oppression is going on, they would make no scruple to do. But the habitation of a man in power is known by his gate, which is generally elevated in proportion to the vanity of

its owner. A lofty gate is one of the insignia of royalty ; such are the *Allah Capi* at Ispahan, and the *Bab Homayan*, or Sublime Porte, at Constantinople. Such an ornament to a dwelling so much attracts the public eye, that it is carefully avoided by those who fear to be accounted rich, lest it should excite the cupidity of their governors. The merchants of Ispahan, for instance, some of whom are very rich, have purposely mean entrances to their houses, whilst the interior is ornamented with great luxury.

The houses of Ispahan are one story in height, but composed of so many apartments, that even the meanest of them covers a considerable area : for the extent that we occupy in our high houses, is in Persia laid out horizontally. They are built either of earth or brick, and their uniformity in height and colour produces a very dull appearance when seen collectively.

The traveller just quoted gives a humorous enumeration of the noises characteristic of a Persian city. First, at the dawn of day, the *muezzins* are heard in a great variety of tones, calling the people to prayers from the tops of the mosques : these are mixed with the sounds of cow-horns, blown by the keepers of the *hummums*, to inform the women, who bathe before the men, that the baths are heated and ready for their reception. The cow-horns set all the dogs in the city howling in a frightful manner. The asses of the town generally beginning to bray about the same time, are answered by all the asses in the neighbourhood : a thousand cocks then intrude their shrill voices, which, with the other subsidiary noises of persons calling to each other, knocking at doors, and cries of children, complete a din very unusual to the ears of a European. In the summer season, as the operations of domestic life are mostly performed in the open air, every kind of noise is heard. At night, all sleep on the tops of their houses, their beds being spread upon their terraces, without any other covering over head than the vault of heaven. The poor seldom have a skreen to keep them from the gaze of passengers ; and as we generally rode out on horseback, says the traveller, at an early hour, we perceived on the tops of houses people either still in bed or just getting up, and certainly no sight was ever stranger. The women appeared to be always up the first, while the men were frequently seen lounging in bed long after the sun was risen. The universal custom of sleeping on the house-top, speaks much in favour of the climate of Persia ; and indeed we found that our repose in the open air was much more refreshing than in the confinement of a room.

On entering the door of a house of any consequence, a long passage generally leads to a spacious court, which has a fountain at the farthest extremity, while the sides are bordered by

canals and alleys of trees. Each house has a *divan-kaneh*, or an apartment for the reception of visitors. When it is of large dimensions, there are two fire-places adorned with paintings and window-glass; and on each side there is a closet, of which no use seems to be made.

It is difficult to form a correct notion of the extent of buildings in Persia. The women have their particular apartments, called *harem-kaneh*, or *zenaneh*; and the servants, who are frequently very numerous, also have rooms for their exclusive occupation.

The furniture of a Persian house is extremely simple, when compared with ours. We find in them neither beds sumptuously decorated, nor tables and chairs of costly wood, nor chandeliers and lustres, nor those numberless articles of various forms and materials, with which European luxury decorates our apartments. In Persia, the furniture consists of a thick coarse felt which covers the floor, and over which is spread a rich Persian carpet. People in middling circumstances content themselves with the felt alone. Instead of chairs, small mattresses about a yard wide are placed on the floor round the room, and covered with chintz, silk, or cloth gold. Cushions set on end close to the wall serve to lean against.

When it is time to retire to rest, a mattress is spread upon the carpet, with a blanket or counterpane, and two pillows of down. This is all the bed used by the Persians, and they lie in it without undressing. The mattress is of velvet, and the counterpane of silk brocade, or cloth of gold or silver. Articles of this kind are not changed perhaps for a century; for these velvets and brocades never wear out, owing in part to the extreme dryness of the atmosphere.

In Persia, a native never enters a room in boots or slippers; and when a foreigner attempts any transgression of this usage, it is looked upon as the height of ill-breeding, if not quite a premeditated insult. As these people use the carpet not merely for domestic purposes, but to kneel down on when they say their prayers, it is considered in some measure sacred; and hence arises the custom of a visitor always leaving his slippers at the room-door. The term door here means whatever denotes the way of ingress to the apartment; for though, in general, there is a double door of carved or painted wood, which may be closed at pleasure, yet it is so seldom shut in the day, that we usually find a silk curtain filling the vacant space of the entrance; its light drapery being not only a cooler but a more elegant appendage than a thick heavy door. An attending servant raises the curtain at the approach of a visitor, and drops it on his having entered. That the custom of such draperies is of great antiquity, we find in various authors. Plutarch, for instance, informs us that

"Alexander, snatching a spear from one of his guards, and meeting Clytus as he was drawing back the *door-curtain*, ran him through the body."

Mr. Morier relates, that at an interview which took place between the prince-royal of Persia and the Russian governor-general of Georgia, the latter, unaccustomed to the manners of the Persians, dressed himself in full uniform, which comprises a pair of tight pantaloons and military boots. The English ambassador had previously intimated to him in a friendly manner, that it would be but a common mark of respect to the Persians, whose carpet was not only their seat but their table, to substitute for his boots the *chakchour*, or red cloth stockings usually worn on such occasions. The general, alleging that the only costume in which he could appear was that which he wore in the presence of his own sovereign, persevered in his full dress, and was seated, boots and all, on the prince's carpet. The prince was so incensed, that as soon as the general was gone, he ordered his master of the ceremonies to be bastinadoed almost to death.

The Persians have no candles for lighting their houses. For this purpose, they use brass cups, fixed upon rods of the same metal, which they fill with pure white tallow, having a cotton wick in the middle. Sometimes they burn scented tapers, the wax of which has been mixed up with oil of cinnamon or cloves, or some other aromatic.

The mode of warming houses is economical, but unwholesome.

As wood is scarce, the Persians are strangers to the use of fire-places and chimneys. In their stead, a sorry expedient presents itself in the shape of a large jar, called a *kourcy*, which is sunk in the earth, generally in the middle of the room, with its mouth on a level with the floor. This the people fill with wood, dung, or any other combustible; and when it is sufficiently charred, the mouth of the vessel is shut in with a square wooden frame, shaped like a low table. The whole is then covered with a thick wadded quilt, under which the family, ranged round, place their knees, to allow the hot vapour to insinuate itself into every fold of their clothing. When very cold, they draw the borders of the quilt up as high as their chins, and form a group something resembling our ideas of a wizard incantation. This mode of warming is very disagreeable and often dangerous, owing in the first place to the immovable position necessary to receiving the full benefit of the glowing embers; secondly, to the nauseous and often deleterious effluvia from the smoke; and thirdly, to the head-aches which are almost always the consequence. Many of the natives put the head and shoulders under the quilt at night; but if the fuel have not been previously charred to the

proper height, suffocation is the usual effect, and the incautious sleepers are found dead in the morning. This singular kind of *chauffoir* answers a double purpose; that of preparing the frugal meal of the family, either as an oven, or to admit on its embers the pot which boils the meat or pottage. Barbarous as the usage may seem, the *kourcy* is not confined to the wild inhabitants of the mountains; it is found in the noblest mansions of the cities, but burning more agreeable fuel; and then the ladies sit from morning till night under the rich draperies spread over the wooden cover; awakening their slumbering senses from the soporific influence of its vapours, by occasional cups of coffee or the delightful fumes of their *kallious*.



CHAPTER XIV.

BATHS.

IN Persia the baths are numerous and magnificent, and the price of admission to them is moderate. They are open to persons of all classes and of both sexes—to the men five days in the week, and to women the other two.

These buildings consist of two very spacious rooms, the one for undressing, and the other containing the bath. Along the walls of the former, are placed seats of marble or stone two feet high, covered with mats and carpets, on which the bathers sit to strip off their clothes. A narrow passage leads to the bathing-room, which is an octagon surmounted by a cupola, at which air and light are admitted, and paved with marble. At the upper end of this room is a large reservoir of water heated by means of boilers.

The process of the bath, when applied by either sex, is much the same: it is thus described by Sir Robert Porter:

The bather, having undressed in the outer room, and retaining nothing but a piece of loose cloth round his waist, is conducted by the proper attendant into the hall of the bath: a large white sheet is then spread on the floor, on which the bather extends himself. The attendant brings from the cistern, which is warmed from a boiler below, a succession of pails full of water, which he continues to pour over the bather till he is well drenched and heated. The attendant then takes the employer's head upon his knees, and rubs with all his might a sort of wet paste of henna plant into his mustachios and beard. In a few minutes, this *pommade* dyes them a bright red. Again he has recourse to the little pail, and showers upon his quiescent patient another

torrent of warm water. Then, putting on a glove made of soft hair, yet possessing some of the scrubbing-brush qualities, he first takes the limbs and then the body, rubbing them hard for three quarters of an hour. A third splashing from the pail prepares for the operation of the pumice-stone. This he applies to the soles of the feet. The next process seizes the hair of the face, whence the henna is cleansed away, and replaced by another paste, called *rang*, composed of the leaves of the indigo plant. To this succeeds the shampooing, which is done by pinching, pulling, and rubbing with so much force and pressure, as to produce a violent glow over the whole frame. Some of the natives delight in having every joint in their bodies strained till they crack; and this part of the operation is brought to such perfection, that the very vertebræ of the back are made to ring a peal in rapid succession. This climax of skill, however, has a very strange effect to the spectator; for, in consequence of both bather and attendant being alike unclothed, the violent exertions of the one and the natural resistance of the joints in the other, give the two the appearance of a wrestling-match. This over, the shampooed body, reduced again to its prostrate state, is rubbed all over with a preparation of soap, confined in a bag, till it is one mass of lather. The soap is then washed off with warm water, when a complete ablution succeeds, the bather being led to the cistern and plunged in. He passes five or six minutes, enjoying the perfectly pure element; and then emerging, has a large dry warm sheet thrown over him, in which he makes his escape back to the dressing-room. During the process of the bath, many of the Persians not only dye their hair black, but their nails, feet, and hands, a bright red. They often smoke half a dozen *kalliouns*; and in short, take the whole business more easily than a European would his sitting down under the hands of a barber to shave his beard.

The Persian ladies regard the bath as the place of their greatest amusement. They make appointments to meet there, and often pass seven or eight hours together in the carpeted saloon, telling stories, relating anecdotes, eating sweetmeats, sharing their *kalliouns*, and completing their beautiful forms into all the fancied perfections of the East.

CHAPTER XV.

MANNER OF TRAVELLING—CARAVANSERAIS.

As the manner of travelling in the East differs widely from ours, it may not be amiss to devote a few pages to that subject.

Owing to the insecurity and difficulty of the roads in Persia, it is dangerous to travel ever so small a distance without attendants or escort. In longer journeys, it is common to join a company of travellers who are going to the same place. Such a company is called *kaufleh*, or caravan. The beasts of burden are camels, horses, and mules.

The *kaufleh* is commanded by a *tchaharvadar*, or chief, who undertakes to furnish servants, horses, and other beasts of burden, and provisions, during the journey, at such a rate as may be agreed on.

The caravan marches in the closest order possible. When there are no *caravanserais* in the country through which it is travelling, as soon as it reaches its *menzil-gah*, or resting-place, the *tchaharvadar* points out to each individual the spot where he is to deposit his baggage and merchandise, that there may be no confusion. The baggage forms a semicircle, the centre of which is occupied by the provisions and beds. This place, as well as the encampment of each traveller, is encompassed with a hair-rope. The beasts of burden are all stationed facing their respective loads, and are merely tied by hair-ropes.

The *tchaharvadar* is stirring with his people before light, to superintend the loading of the goods, so that the caravan may start with the dawn, that is, between three and four in the morning. A bell or drum gives the signal for departure.

Women of superior rank, and sick persons, travel in *takhtirevans*, or litters carried by two camels or mules, one before and the other behind, as described in a preceding part of the work. The women and children of the poor are carried in panniers suspended from the backs of mules or camels.

The Orientals, though they account the founding of *caravanserais*, or inns in which travellers are lodged gratuitously, a work well pleasing to God, nevertheless, take no pains to keep their roads in order. Turn which way you please in Turkey and in Persia, and you will find none of those beautiful roads which in Europe facilitate the communication between the most remote provinces. Kinneir attributes to the barbarous monarchs of Asia the notion, that the bad state of the roads tends to strengthen their authority. Accustomed to see their power defied, and their thrones threatened by rebellious officers, they would be

apprehensive lest, by constructing high-roads through all parts of their empire, they should facilitate the enterprises of these officers against the principal cities; whereas, the difficulties of a mountainous, dry, and desert country, by retarding the progress of an army, afford the sovereign time to collect his forces.

The Persians, having no high-roads, are unacquainted with the use of any such marks of distances as our mile-stones. In practice, they do not even employ the division of distances by *farsangs*; leaving that measure to the curious traveller and the professed geographer, they reckon the distance from town to town, by days' journeys, or halting-places. These journeys are not governed by the distance travelled, but by the convenience of the spot for passing the night: Kämpfer remarked, that they were never less than six leagues nor more than twelve.

The Persians employ the same term for the station or halting-place, as for the day's journey. This is some spot on the road, where there is in general a *caravanserai*, and where water fit for drinking is supplied by nature, but more commonly obtained by art. In the deserts, the presence of water alone determines the halting-place. The traveller, overcome with fatigue, reclines under an acacia, a cypress, or a sycamore; his lodging costs him nothing; he sleeps abroad without apprehension; quenches his thirst with limpid water, unadulterated by any mixture; and appeases his hunger with dried fruit, which the *tchaharvadar* has taken care to provide for the use of the caravan.

The form and number of the *caravanserais* differ with the climate: they are more frequent in the northern than in the southern provinces, where the purity and dryness of the air allow the traveller to pass the night abroad without danger to his health. Their extent and elegance depend on the fortune of the founder: and in the north of Persia, they are commonly built of brick. Their figure is usually a square, and externally they exhibit nothing but a dead wall. A description of the *caravanserai* of Guz, will furnish an idea of the general accommodations of them all.

The extent of this building is an exact square, of one hundred yards on every side, flanked by four towers. Within these walls are the buildings which form the accommodations of the caravan. On entering the great gate, the first object that presents itself is a kind of piazza, extending on every side of the interior of the quadrangle, leaving a noble area or court in the middle. These piazzas are subdivided into lofty arched apartments, open in front, and all neatly paved. At ten feet within each of these is another chamber fifteen feet deep, and containing at its farther end a fire-place, besides several little compartments cut out of the thickness of the wall, called *topshehs* or

cupboards, which are deemed indispensable in every Persian room. This interior chamber is seldom resorted to before winter; the outer one, open to the court, being considered the summer apartment from the advantage it affords of fresh air. The traveller spreads his *nummud* upon the paved floor, fitting it up with bedding according to his own idea of comfort; but nothing is really necessary beyond a pillow, with a sheet for the warmest nights and a quilt for the cool. Immediately behind this double range of chambers runs an open space or lane, in like manner following the quadrangular sweep of the building; the hinder side of the lane, that is the one nearest the wall of the *caravanserai*, being an arcade also, and divided into cell-like apartments, for the use of servants, muleteers, and other persons wishing to keep station near their cattle, which are generally stabled in the lane between the front of this last arcade, and the back of the one first described. Sometimes, when the *caravanserai* is very full, the animals are picketed in the great court, while their attendants sleep on a large elevated square platform, which occupies the centre, and round it the packages of the travellers are piled up in heaps. Reposing in the open air is not merely a luxury to all orders of people in this climate, in summer, but it is indispensable to their health and comfort in many other respects, close apartments being often not only intolerable from heat, but sorely infested with vermin. One ample entrance leads into the *caravanserai*, the gates of which are closed soon after sun-set, and only occasionally re-opened during the night for the egress of departing guests. Beneath the extensive vaulted roof of the porch, are the quarters of the keeper, or warden, and his people; with the shop and other repositories of the accommodations, he prepares for travellers. Among his numerous stores, we see exposed to sale, tobacco, rice, grapes, water-melons, eggs, grease, bread, wood, corn, *moss*, &c. This last article is a beverage of acidulated milk, which, diluted with water, is a favourite drink with the natives. The antiquity of this beverage is so great, that Plutarch mentions it as part of the ceremony at the consecration of the Persian kings, to quaff a large goblet of this acidulated mixture. Every commodity being sold at double the ordinary price, the renter of the *caravanserai* is enabled to pay liberally to the agent of the crown for his privilege, and to realize a handsome profit besides.

In most of the *caravanserais* which remain from earlier times, there are three or four vaulted chambers over the grand portico, which have always been held in more dignity than any others of the building. These are perforated on all sides with apertures and doors, being a sort of temples of the winds, imbibing a breeze

or blast at every pore. Hence, when the wind is at all brisk, it is difficult to find a sheltered nook in these chambers from the clouds of dust and gravel; but in serene weather, the traveller, stretched on carpets in one of these balconies, owing to the zephyrs around and to the heavens above glowing with stars, enjoys a truly luxurious repose.

As the *caravanserais* are open to travellers of every description, the shelter which they afford is frequently purchased at the expense of other comforts. Sir R. Porter relates, that at one of these places he found a large body of pilgrims, many of whom were stripped to the skin to have free chase after the infinity of vermin which covered their squalid and unchanged garments: and as they never destroy what they discover, but throw them down, the floor of any place of their rest seldom fails swarming like the quarters of Egypt. Fleas too are met with in all the *caravanserais*, skipping about in myriads; and as whirlwinds are frequent at the close of the day, these creatures literally come in clouds, mingled with chaff and dust, and entering the open recesses fill every nook and dwelling-hole destined to shelter the passing guest.

The traveller just quoted also informs us, that the town of Mianna is infested with a plague, which it has been found impossible to eradicate, in the form of a small but poisonous bug. It breeds in myriads in all the old houses, and may be seen creeping over every part of their walls, of the size and shape of the European bug, only a little flatter, and of a bright red colour. Its bite is mortal, producing death at the expiration of eight or nine months. Strangers of every sort, not merely foreigners, but persons not usually inhabiting the town or its vicinity, are liable to be thus poisoned; while the people themselves and the adjacent peasantry are either never bitten, or if so the consequences are not more baneful to them than the sting of the least noxious insect. Sir Robert adds, that this is without doubt the same city which the often marvellous and sometimes veritable Maundeville mentions as "lying in the way from Thaurisso (Tabreez) towards the East, where no Christene man may longe dwelle, ne enduren with life in that cytee, but dyen within short time and no man knowethe the cause."

Kotzebue, whose description of this insect agrees pretty nearly with the above, distinctly asserts, however, that its bite proves mortal in twenty-four hours. He mentions two instances of its effects. He says, he was repeatedly told by the English at Tabreez, that they had lost a servant at Mianna, who had the misfortune to be bitten by one of these vermin: he complained immediately of parching heat over his whole body; shortly afterwards he became delirious, and expired in dreadful convulsions.

Colonel Baron Wrede, continues the same writer, who has long served with credit in Grusia, and who was some years since sent on a mission to Persia, relates a better authenticated instance of the poisonous bite of these bugs. It was pretty late in the year, when their bite is considered less venomous than in the heat of summer, and the baron thought that its effect might not be so dangerous as was reported. He determined, therefore, to pass the night at Mianna, taking care, however, to keep a light burning in his apartment. Every one happily escaped, with the exception of a Cossack, who next morning observed a black spot on his foot. The man talked wildly, and at last became delirious. The inhabitants recommended by way of antidote that an ox should be slaughtered, and his skin wrapped while warm round the Cossack's foot: this was done, but to no purpose; he died in dreadful convulsions. The inhabitants assert that persons bitten by these bugs have been saved by tasting nothing but water, sugar, and honey, for forty days. They themselves handle them without danger. It is fortunate that clothes and similar articles do not harbour these vermin, otherwise they might perhaps have spread throughout the whole country.

The Persians have no wheel-carriages: hence the presents carried out for the king by Sir Gore Ouseley, being for the most part too bulky to be loaded on camels, had to be carried by men from Bushire to Teheran, a distance of 620 miles. To lighten the labour of descending the steep mountains, the Persian attendants adopted the expedient of fastening some of the cases upon a gun-carriage, and letting it run at random down the declivities. The destruction of the article attached to it was the almost invariable consequence: out of seventy mirrors, about one-third arrived safe, the rest being entirely demolished.

Among the articles destined for the king was a carriage, which the ambassador, attended by the grand-visir and all the principal officers of state, presented with great formality to his majesty. He walked round the carriage, examined it minutely, admired its beauty, criticised its contrivances, and then got inside, leaving his shoes at the door, and seating himself with much satisfaction on the velvet cushions. Some of the secretaries of state and other persons of rank, in their court-dresses, then fastened themselves to it and dragged the king backward and forward, to his great delight, which he expressed by some good remarks on the convenience of carriages and the ingenuity of Europeans in bringing them to such great perfection. The king kept his seat more than half an hour, observing, that there would be very good sitting-room for two, pointing to the bottom of the carriage as the place for the second. When he had smoked his

kallioun within it, he descended, made the ambassador a very handsome acknowledgment for so magnificent a present, and ordered the Ameen-ad-Dowlah to purchase six large horses to draw it. Instead, however, of being used, it was put into a warehouse, where it was bricked up, and where it is likely to remain.

Pietro della Valle relates, that when he was at Ispahan, the English gave a superb carriage to Shah Abbas, who looked at it once: it was then put away, and never seen afterwards.



CHAPTER XVI.

OF THE FESTIVAL OF NOWROOSE, OR NEW YEAR'S DAY.

DJEMSID, one of the most illustrious of the ancient monarchs of Persia, instituted a festival in celebration of the entrance of the sun into the sign of Aries, the moment at which the solar year commences.

This festival, called *Nowroose*, or new day, the ancient Persians held on the first of the month of Ferverdyn, corresponding with March, with which their year began. The rejoicings on this occasion lasted six days. On the morning of the first day of the Nowroose, a youth of handsome person, representing the new year, entered the king's chamber, at the moment of the sun's appearance above the horizon. "Who art thou?" asked the king. "Whence comest thou? Whither goest thou? What is thy name?"—"I am the happy, the blessed," replied the youth: "God hath sent me hither, and I bring with me the new year."—He was followed by another youth, who presented to the monarch a silver salver, upon which were wheat, barley, sesamum, rice, (seven ears and seven grains of each) sugar, and two pieces of gold. The ministers, the officers of the empire, and even the private subjects, were admitted to the foot of the throne. When the grain presented to the sovereign was made into bread, some of it was carried to the king, who ate a piece himself, and divided the remainder among the surrounding assemblage, saying:—"This is the first day of a new epoch; it is right to renew what time produces." With these words, he gave robes of honour to his officers.

On the first of the six days of this festival, the king was wholly engaged with the welfare of his people and the means of rendering them happy. The second he devoted to the astrologers and the learned; the third, to the priests and to his counsellors; the fourth, to the princes of the blood and the *grandees*; the fifth, to the children of the royal family; and the sixth, to his sub-

jects generally; receiving on that day the presents which they were accustomed to make him.

The conversion of Persia to Islamism was followed by the abolition of this festival; for the fanaticism of the first Muslims would not have suffered a solemnity commemorative of any other religion than that of Mahomet, which was to overturn all other creeds and to reign over the whole earth. The Guebres alone continued to celebrate the *Nowroose*. But when Malek Shah resolved to reform the calendar, and instituted the era called after his name, the astronomers, having observed to him that he ascended the throne on the first day of the spring equinox, and that it would be but right to receive the solemnity of that day in honour of such an important event, the Seljuk monarch, delighted with a proposal so flattering to his vanity, eagerly adopted the idea. Ever since his time, that is, since the end of the fifth century of the hegira, or the eleventh of our era, the *Nowroose* has been celebrated with great pomp throughout all Persia.

This civil festival, the only one which the Persians have, though no longer connected as in the early ages with the religion of the country, has nevertheless retained many ceremonies similar to those of antiquity.

On the day when the festival is to begin, the astrologers, magnificently dressed, repair to the palace of the king or of the governor of the province, and station themselves on a terrace or in a belvidere, to watch the moment of the sun's entrance into the sign of Aries. As soon as they have announced it, numerous volleys of musketry are fired; horns, kettle-drums, and trumpets, rend the air; all sorts of sports and amusements commence throughout the whole city; and high and low give themselves up to the wildest joy. During the three days that the *Nowroose* lasts, there is nothing but feasting, horse-racing, exercises and exhibitions of various kinds: every one appears in his best apparel, or in new clothes, pays and receives visits, and makes presents to his acquaintance, who offer him theirs in return. The day before the *Nowroose*, they mutually send one another eggs, painted and gilt, which sometimes cost two or three guineas. This practice of presenting eggs on new year's day seems to derive its origin from India.

When the moment of the equinox is past, all the grandees repair to court, and present their offerings to the king: those of the princes and the governors of provinces and cities, are presented by their agents. These presents consist of jewels, rich stuffs, precious stones, perfumes, horses, and even money. Their value is proportionate to the rank and fortune of the giver: for the lowest officer is obliged to make his present, just as well as

the Beylerbey. Sir Robert Porter states, and as he assures us from unquestionable authority, that the personal present made every *Nowroose* to the king by Hadjee Mohammed Hossein Khan, while he governed the province of Ispahan, amounted to not less than 200,000 *toomauns*.



CHAPTER XVII.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE GUEBRES, ARMENIANS, COURDS, AND GYPSIES.

SECTION I.

THE GUEBRES.

THE Guebres are the relics of the ancient Persians, who have refused to embrace the doctrine of Mahomet, and retained the religion of Zoroaster, and the manners and customs of their ancestors, notwithstanding the lapse of ages and the revolutions of their country. In India, they are called Parsees.

The ancient differ as much from the modern Persians, in person and costume as in manners. They are short and stout, wear their beard and hair long, dress in a short vest, and cover the head with a cap of fine wool, which bears some resemblance to our hats. Their garments are of linen or woollen cloth, or stuff made of goats' hair; and they prefer that kind of brown colour which we call *fillemot*, to any other.

As to the women, it is easy to perceive that indigence and distress rather than nature have given them the coarse features which characterize the physiognomy of most of them; for there are some whose faces are delicate, beautiful, and intelligent. Their depressed state has also banished from their minds all fondness for dress, and disposition to coquetry. Nothing in fact is so destitute of taste, and so closely bordering on inelegance, as their costume.

Idleness is a vice unknown among the Guebres: all of them follow some occupation, and this active life preserves them from numberless vices which disgrace polished societies. Some cultivate the earth, others follow useful trades, dress skins, and make carpets, caps, and fine woollen cloths. They are strangers to the liberal arts, and despise commerce. Agriculture is in their opinion the noblest of the arts, and the most honourable of professions. This notion is instilled into them by their religion, which inculcates, that there is nothing more meritorious

in the sight of God than to beget children, to bring waste land into cultivation, and to plant trees. May not this principle enable us to account for the difference between the flourishing state of Persia in ancient times, and its present situation? and is it not sufficient to justify the statements of ancient writers respecting the fertility of the soil, the population, and the wealth of that empire?

The manners of the Guebres show the influence of their way of life and occupations: they are mild and simple. Quarrels and disputes rarely disturb their tranquillity; they are adjusted by the elders, who officiate as magistrates, and are dependent on the Persian government.

The Guebres drink wine and eat all sorts of animal food, excepting that of the cow and ox, by what hand soever it may have been cooked.

They never intermarry with other nations: the wife of a Guebre must be a Guebre by birth. Their religion prohibits bigamy and divorce; yet they are allowed to take a second wife, when the first has been married nine years without having children.

The learning of their priests consists of astrology, a slight knowledge of Mahometanism, and a still slighter of their own religion, which is composed of an assemblage of absurd doctrines, superstitious practices, and ridiculous maxims. These priests are called *destour*; they are the Magi of the Greeks. Their high priest, who is styled *destour destouran*, destour of destours; resides at Atesh-gah, the principal fire-temple, situated on a mountain about 35 miles from Yezd; and he is assisted in his religious ministry by several subordinate priests, whose duty it is to keep up the sacred fire.

The Guebres carefully abstain from any explanation on the subject of the worship which they pay to fire. In ancient times, it was certainly relative; at the present day, ignorance may probably have rendered it direct, and they may adore what was originally but an emblem of the deity. When they pray they turn towards the sun, considering all prayers offered in any other position as idolatry. With them, as with the Musulmans, Friday is the day devoted to religion and rest; they hold besides particular festivals and fasts, and go on pilgrimage to the fire-temple of Yezd. Their chief festival, which is in honour of fire and light, falls in the second month in their year.

SECTION II.

THE ARMENIANS.

Shah Abbas I., the greatest monarch of Persia in latter times, kept two objects stedfastly in view, during the course of his long reign—to encourage commerce in his dominions, and to secure them from the inroads of the Turks. To this end, he depopulated Armenia, and removed its inhabitants into the interior of his kingdom, to Ghilan, Mazanderan, and Ispahan, where they exclusively occupied the suburb of Julfa, thus named after one of their native cities. It was, in fact, through Armenia that the Turks always entered Persia. Shah Abbas hoped to prevent their incursions, by interposing a desert between their country and his own.

The result proved the correctness of the views of that great prince. The Armenians, who had previously been husbandmen, soon distinguished themselves by their skill in commerce and the arts; and they particularly excelled in the manufacture of silks. After some time, their numerous caravans, laden with these commodities, traversed Asia, and penetrated even into Europe. A very brisk trade was established between Persia and the West. Persia exported large quantities of silk, and received in return English and Dutch cloths, brocades, Venetian mirrors, cochineal, watches, and other articles. Gold and silver, which had been very rare in that country, began to circulate in abundance; and the Armenians, the agents of this trade, became the most opulent merchants in the world.

The Armenian possessed the qualities requisite to ensure this complete success. Insinuating, frugal, active, intelligent, he acquired, by incessant pains, attention, and industry, what he preserved by prudence, and a line of conduct very different from that of the generality of European merchants. When he set out on a long journey, he took with him a small stock of flour, biscuit, smoked meat, and dried fruit, part of which he frequently brought back with him on his return: and while he abode in cities, he took up his quarters with some of his countrymen, to save the expense of lodging. If his provisions were exhausted, he bartered pieces of jewellery for more. When he passed through places inhabited by Armenians, he was welcomed by them as a brother, and treated with hospitality: so that he could travel over a vast space at little cost, without ever swerving from his usual temperance and economy.

The state of the Armenians of Persia has been equally affected with that of its other inhabitants, by the late revolutions. These

people, whose naturalization so speedily enriched the kingdom, now live in deplorable indigence, and the remnant of them is daily dwindling away. Julfa is still their principal abode; but instead of the 3400 houses which it could boast in the days of Shah Abbas, at present it can scarcely reckon 300. The vast extent of the ruins which surround it, and the remains of magnificence still apparent in the walls of some of its former houses, confirm the accounts given by Chardin and other travellers of its ancient splendour. Though the few Armenians who still remain, have had a great patron in the present prime minister, who, while he held the post of Ameen-ad-dowlah and governor of Ispahan, encouraged others to settle at Julfa, yet there is an appearance of misery about them, which indicates a want of confidence in the government under which they live.

Their principal church is a fine building, handsomely ornamented within, and, what is esteemed a great privilege in Mahometan countries, enjoys the use of a bell. Some of their other churches, for notwithstanding the smallness of their community, they still have twelve, also have bells: but others, as well as that belonging to the convent of nuns, have only a board suspended between two wooden pillars, which is beaten by a mallet to call the people to prayers.

The Armenians profess a Christianity differing but little from that of the Roman Catholics. Like the latter, they have seven sacraments; but they deny the existence of Purgatory, though they offer up prayers for the dead.

The tombs of the Armenians are generally composed of one oblong block of black stone, with an inscription, and frequently an emblematical designation of the trade or profession of the deceased sculptured upon them. Thus, if a carpenter, a saw and hammer are designed; if a tailor, his shears and measure; and if a learned man, a book and reading-board.

The persons of the present Armenians of Persia, whether male or female, possess nothing of the dignity or sweetness which mark their Persian neighbours. So lamentably has neglect quenched their spirit, and their consequent self-abasement degraded their forms and features, that they could not be known for the same race whose ancestors sat at the same board with Shah Abbas.

The costume of the men nearly resembles that generally worn by the Persians: but the women differ considerably in theirs from the fashions of the Mahometan ladies. The Armenians bind their heads with silk handkerchiefs of various colours, the ends falling loose down the back; and under this sort of head-mantle they wear another kerchief of white linen, which passes behind the ears over the chin and hangs down on the breast. When

they go out, this piece of drapery is occasionally drawn up over the mouth, leaving nothing of the face to be seen but the eyes and the too often very floridly shining nose. A kind of jacket reaches nearly to the knee; it is made of different sorts of stuff, and enriched with lace and embroidery, according to the wealth of the husband. A pair of rather tight trowsers, of flowered velvet, trimmed also, with a fine shawl round the waist, completes the dress of an Armenian lady. Sometimes, however, old women and children wear the ancient national girdle, namely a broad belt ornamented with knobs and buttons, and clasped in front by an oval piece of silver of great size and weight and heavily embossed. The sheet, or *chadre*, with which they envelope themselves when going abroad, is white. In summer, their feet are naked; in winter, covered by a sock. They seldom adopt the walking-boot of the Persian ladies, which is yellow, of the Hessian shape, and reaches half-way up the leg. The children of both sexes dress in the same style as their parents; only with this addition, that the caps of the girls are ornamented with rows of ducats and *toomauns*.

Such is the description of Sir Robert Porter. Mr. Morier gives us to understand, that the piece of drapery with which the women cover the lower part of the face, passes over the nose, and is so very tightly compressed that the nose of every Armenian woman is flattened as broad as a negro's: in the house, as well as abroad, they wear this nose-band, which is never laid aside even in bed. Their features are broad and coarse, their complexions fair and ruddy, and their eyes black; but their faces in general excite little interest. They allow none of their hair to be seen, excepting a long plaited tail that hangs over the back to the ground; and on their heads they place a species of cushion, which expands at the top. See the opposite plate.

The custom of veiling themselves is observed by the Armenian females with such care, that a man marries without having ever seen the face of his bride. Hence Tournefort remarks with rather more of pleasantry than truth, that there are Armenians who would not know their own wives were they to find them in the arms of another man. "Every night," says he, "they extinguish the light before they unveil, and most of them never uncover their faces in the day-time. An Armenian, returning from a long journey, is not sure to find the same wife; he cannot tell whether she may not be dead, and whether some other woman may not have stepped into the place of the deceased."

The religion of the Armenians is not that of the heart, but consists in the observance of ceremonies and an external show of piety: they hurry through the duties which it enjoins, as they would the most irksome task. Their priests themselves encour-



ARMENIAN LADY.



age these dispositions, by their ignorance and bigotry. With them, the forms of religion are every thing: they never view it according to its true nature, as a gift bestowed by the deity on men to sanctify in their eyes the principle of morality, and to make them happy in this life through fear of the punishments and hope of the rewards of a future existence. "Let an Armenian," says Thevenot, "confess that he has committed robbery, murder, or any other heinous offence, the confessor tells him that God is merciful: but, should he accuse himself of having eaten butter on a Wednesday, Friday, or fast-day, oh! this is a most atrocious crime, for which nothing but the severest penance can atone."

The Armenian clergy consist of a patriarch resident at the convent of Etschmiazyn, archbishops, bishops, doctors, secular priests, and monks. The patriarch is styled *Catholicos*, a denomination which the Armenians have borrowed from the Greeks.

SECTION III.

THE BANIANs.

The Hindoos who are scattered over Persia, and who are engaged in mercantile pursuits, are called *Banians*. This appellation is a corruption of the Indian word, *vanik* or *banik*, merchant.

The Banians were the chief agents of the trade between India and Persia: they rivalled the Armenians in activity, intelligence, industry, and wealth; and at the time of Shah Abbas, their number at Ispahan amounted to fifteen thousand. Their fortunes have followed those of the other inhabitants of Persia. So long as they found a market for their merchandise and enjoyed security of property, they continued to dwell in that country, which they enriched with the gold of India: but despotism drove them from it, and few of them are now to be met with, except in the southern provinces, on the shores of the Persian Gulf.

The Banians resident in Persia have retained the manners, customs, and religion of their native country.

SECTION IV.

THE COURDS.

The Courds, who once dwelt chiefly in the mountains situated between Turkey and Persia, and gave their name to a very extensive country, are now spread over the whole of the latter kingdom, where they retain the rude manners of a pastoral race.

Most of the Courds live in tents like the Arabs, subsisting on the produce of the soil and of their flocks, and by plunder, for they are a nation of robbers. They have a particular language, which partakes more of the Persian than of the Turkish. Each of their tribes is governed by a khan, in whom the chief civil and military power is vested.

The dress of the Courds differs more in hue than shape from the ordinary Persian. Instead of the black skin cap, the Courd has one of whitish felt, pointed at the top, but varying in height. It has flaps falling over the ears, to shelter them from the mountain cold. In winter, and in the keen higher regions, an additional garment is worn, called a *kadack*: its form is that of a short jacket, and its fabric and colour the same as the cap. They seldom stir without a heavy pear-headed stick in their hands, and frequently are armed besides with a sword. Whether they live in villages or towns, their hearts yearn after all that belongs to the open field; the boldest spirits long for the fray and the spoil; and they gladly seize whatever plunder fortune may throw into their hands.

The women of the Courdish race are generally of a pale mahogany hue, with very fine features; their nose is usually aquiline, with eyes bright as the antelope's, and the whole countenance expressive of a frank and amiable disposition. The men have nothing of that suspicion regarding their women, which distinguishes the Turks and Persians; hence their wives and daughters walk abroad in the security of innocence, without the great veil of *chadre*. Their only appendage which at all resembles such a covering, is a handkerchief, hanging loose from the back of the head, which they can pull at will quite over the face, or allow it merely to shade the cheek. Their persons are enveloped in a long blue garment shaped like a shift, and opening low down the bosom, where it is partly closed with loops fastened to buttons, usually formed of pieces of money, an ornament which they affect in profusion. Their ears too are decorated with large silver rings running through strings of the same. In the cottages or at the tent-doors, these women appear without restraint, and are as ready as any peasant girl in England to pay to a stranger the simple duties of hospitality. Modest when maidens and chaste as wives, they cultivate those vigorous habits in themselves which produce an athletic race of children, and set them a fearless example. "Our boys are to be soldiers," they say, "and they must learn to bear and to dare every thing. We show them the way."

The religion of the Courds is Islamism, corrupted by ignorance and superstition; they are either Sunnites or Shiites, according as they reside in Turkey or Persia.

A small number of Courds dwell in the towns and in fortified villages, under chiefs whose services are purchased in time of war by the king of Persia.

Kerim Khan, the predecessor of Aga Mohammed Khan on the throne of Persia, sprung from the Courdish tribe of Zends. This barbarous nation boasts of having produced several other great men, among whom they reckon Sultan Saladin, who belonged to the tribe of the Ravadieh.

SECTION V.

GYPSIES.

Gypsies are found scattered in small bands over most of the provinces of Persia, where they are called *Kara-Shee*, or the black race. The complexions of both sexes are indeed much darker than those of the native Persians: and their physiognomy agrees with that of most of their brethren and sisters, who wander about in various parts of Europe. Sir R. Porter fell in, near the lake of Ouroumia, with an encampment composed of two tribes, both Mahometans, but of the rival sects. They have their own *mollahs* or priests. He inquired if they, like the Eelauts of the country, had any marked place or district in Persia, whence they originally came. They replied—"No, nor did they know to what country they had originally belonged, but were certain it was not Persia." They lead there the same vagabond life as their brethren do with us. The men steal, make sieves, hair-ropes and other trifling articles, from the produce of which they pay a yearly tribute to the government of two *toomauns* per family or tent. The women, when occupied in domestic affairs, beg and tell fortunes; the latter being generally muttered over a few torn leaves from a Frangy (European) book, or the blade-bone of a sheep, and accompanied with the *thread* of your life, which mysterious gift consists of a piece of worsted, knotted more or less, according to the mishaps and obstacles that are to occur in the real line of the destiny to which it is attached. Though living apparently unshackled by human law, and frequently without the visible profession of any religion, the men are seldom found engaged in very atrocious acts of depredation, nor are the women accused of want of personal virtue.

The traveller is of opinion that these outcasts are descendants from the captive tribes of Israel.

PART V.**ARTS AND SCIENCES.****CHAPTER I.****AGRICULTURE.**

THE extreme dryness of the climate and the great deficiency of rivers, have obliged the Persian husbandmen to turn all their ingenuity to the discovery of springs, and to the art of bringing their streams to the surface of the earth. To this end, when a spring has been discovered, they dig a well until they come to water; and if they find that the quantity is sufficient to repay them for proceeding with the work, they dig a second well, at such a distance from the other as to allow a subterranean communication between both. They then ascertain the nearest line of communication with the level of the plain upon which the water is to be brought into use, and dig a succession of wells with a subterraneous communication between the whole series, till the water at length comes to the surface, when it is conducted by embanked channels to the place of its destination.

The extent of country through which such streams are sometimes conducted, is truly astonishing. Mouths of wells are frequently to be seen in lonely valleys, and may be traced in various windings into the plain. Such is the consequence of a new *kanaut* or aqueduct, that the day when the water is brought to its ultimate destination is a day of rejoicing among the peasants. The astrologers are consulted to name a fortunate hour for the appearance of the stream, and when it comes forth, it is received with songs and music, attended by shouts of joy and exclamations of *Mobatrek bashed!* "Prosperity attend it!"

The labour and expense of a *kanaut*, of course depends greatly upon the distance whence the water is to be brought. The mode of making the well is very simple. A shaft is first dug, then a wooden trundle is placed over it, from which is suspended a leather bucket which is filled with the excavated matter by a man below and wound up by another above. Where the soil is soft, the mouth of the well is secured by masonry.

The mode of drawing water from these wells is as follows:—Two posts support a cylinder, which turns on an axis and is placed over the mouth of the well. From this cylinder descends a cord of sufficient length to reach the bottom, having a bucket fastened to one end, and being tied at the other to the collar or

yoke of an ox. To ease the labour of the animal as much as possible, he is made to go along a direct path down a slope; and to prevent his deviating from it, the lateral ring of his collar runs upon a rope one end of which is fastened to one of the posts mentioned above, and the other to a stake fixed at the farther end of the path. Thus when the ox draws, the slope naturally hurries him along, and the vessel full of water is raised with much less exertion of strength than would otherwise be required.

The buckets are no other than large skins, the mouth of which is held open by a wooden hoop with two cross-bars. They are used of two shapes: some being formed almost like a funnel, terminating in a curved tube closed by a cock; the others resembling a large tub: but the use of the former requires a second contrivance, consisting of two upright posts and a cylinder on an axis, placed over a reservoir situated near the well. A cord fastened to the end of the tube winds round this small cylinder, passes over the larger, and is tied to the collar of the ox: the purpose of this cord is to draw the skin filled with water out of the well, to be emptied by the tube into the reservoir.

In spots more favoured by nature, situated at the foot of snow-covered mountains, the industry of the Persian is successfully exerted. In the defiles of the mountains, wherever the situation permits, the snow-water and rain-water are detained by walls, and when their quantity is sufficient to form streams, channels are dug by which they may be drawn off.

The ploughing is performed by means of a share drawn by two oxen, harnessed not by the horns, but to a yoke that passes over the chest. This share is very short, and its coulter but slightly cuts the ground.

As the furrows are made, the clods are broken with large wooden beaters, and the surface is smoothed with the spade and a harrow that has very small teeth. Thus prepared, the ground, divided into squares, looks like garden-beds, with borders a foot or more in height, according to the quantity of water required for irrigating it.

The sickle used in Persia is unlike ours, being scarcely bent in the blade. Threshing is performed by a machine composed of a large square wooden frame, which contains two cylinders, placed parallel to each other, and having a rotatory motion. They are stuck full of spikes with sharp square points, but not all of a length. These rollers have the appearance of the barrel of an organ, and their projections, when brought in contact with the corn, break the stalk and disengage the ear. They are put in motion by a couple of cows or oxen yoked to the frame, and guided by a man sitting on the plank that covers the frame which

contains the cylinders. He drives this agricultural equipage in a circle round a heap of corn, keeping at a certain distance from its verge, close to which a second peasant stands, holding a long-handled pronged fork, shaped like the spread sticks of a fan; and with which he throws the unbound sheaves forward, to meet the rotatory motion of the machine. He has a shovel also ready, to remove to a distance the corn that has already passed the wheel. Other men are on the spot with the like implement, with which they throw the corn aloft in the air, when the wind blows away the chaff, and the grain falls to the ground. This process is repeated till the corn is completely winnowed; it is then gathered up, and deposited for use in large earthen jars.

Sir R. Porter mentions one district, where he remarked as a singularity a very clumsy sort of cart employed for carrying corn. It moves on two solid wheels, while the body and the pole take the shape of a long triangle; and is drawn by oxen or buffaloes. In no other part of Persia, did he find so useful an assistant to husbandry as even this rude vehicle.

The vale of Khoi, about fifteen miles in length and ten in breadth, is described as equal to any spot of similar extent, either in Persia or in any other country, for richness of cultivation. It produces great quantities of corn, cotton, and rice. The soil is so stiff, that it sometimes requires ten pair of buffaloes to drag the plough-share through it. When the plough is at work, two or three men, according to the length of the team, are seated upon the yokes, exciting their cattle by a loud song, which, in the stillness of the morning, has a very pleasing effect. Their plough is an instrument of more mechanism than that of the south of Persia, and furrows the earth much more effectually. The corn grows thicker and better than in any other parts, owing, doubtless, to the superiority of this implement, and also to the abundance of water with which this plain is blessed.

Pigeon-houses are erected in Persia, at a distance from human habitations, for the sole purpose of collecting pigeon's dung for manure. There are many such in the environs of Ispahan. They are large round towers, rather broader at the bottom than at the top, and crowned by conical spiracles, through which the pigeons descend. Their interior resembles a honeycomb, pierced with a thousand holes, each of which forms a snug retreat for a nest. More care appears to have been bestowed upon their outside, than upon the generality of the dwelling-houses, for they are painted and ornamented. The extraordinary flights of pigeons, and the compactness of their mass, give them the appearance of clouds, and actually obscure the sun in their passage.

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The Persians do not eat pigeons, keeping them solely for their dung, which is the dearest manure in this country; and as they employ it entirely in the rearing of melons, it is probably on this account that the melons of Ispahan are so much finer than those of other countries. The revenue of a pigeon-house is about one hundred *toomauns* per annum; and the great value of this dung, which rears a fruit indispensable to the existence of the natives during the great heats of summer, may probably throw some light upon that passage of Scripture which relates, that during the famine in Samaria, "the fourth part of a *cab* of dove's dung was sold for five pieces of silver." 2 Kings, vi. 25.

Sir Robert Porter describes a method by which the villagers who keep bees take the honey without destroying the industrious insects. The hives are constructed like long thin barrels thrust through the mud walls of the house; one end opens to the air for the entrance of the bees, and the other, which projects more than a foot into the inhabited rooms, is closed with a cake of clay. When the owner wishes to take the honey, he has only to make a continued noise for some little time at the closed end, which causes all the bees to take flight at the other. During their absence he removes the clay, and clears the hive of honey, leaving, however, sufficient for their winter supply. The inner end is re-closed, and the little labourers soon return to their home to commence their operations anew.



CHAPTER II.

COMMERCE.

PERSIA never was an essentially commercial country at any period of its history, unless when under the dominion of the Arabs. The caravans from the western provinces of the Saracen empire, then passed through it in their way to Transoxana and some parts of India. The laws of Zoroaster, which encouraged agriculture, naturally checked commerce; and as most of the rivers were unnavigable, there was not much internal traffic. The soil produces few things in sufficient quantity to be exported: some wheat, barley, rice, dates, and almonds, are, however, shipped at Bushire, Muscat, and other parts of the Persian Gulf.

The principal manufactured articles are gold brocade, silks, cotton stuffs of different kinds, leather, shawls of inferior quality, and rich carpets. With respect to shawls, observes Kotzebue, the Europeans are under a great mistake: those which are

worn in Persia are the very worst I ever saw. We have seen people there admire shawls which no lady in our country would think of wearing; and I am therefore not surprised that the Persian ambassador at the court of Petersburg, who took a fancy to make a present of one to the Countess Orloff, should soon afterwards have the mortification to see it worn by her maid, while the countess herself had on a shawl of such value as absolutely astonished his excellency. The Persians cannot afford to pay the prices that are given for them at Constantinople and in Russia.

The cloths of Ispahan, Yezd, and Kashan, are exported to Russia by way of Astrachan, and exchanged for broad cloths, velvets, satins, and hardware. At Meragah and Shiraz, there are glass manufactories; and guns and pistols are made in almost all the large towns. The lances of Khorasan are in the highest estimation; they are made by descendants of those skilful cutlers whom Tamerlane transplanted from Damascus into that province. Yezd, a frontier city of Fars, is at present, from its advantageous position, the centre of the whole commerce of Persia.

Persia produces many species of gum and drugs, and among others assafœtida, great quantities of which are exported to India: it receives in exchange sugar, indigo, spices, and several European commodities.



CHAPTER III.

MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

THE science of medicine among the Persians, not being founded either on anatomy or physiology, has nothing but conjecture for its guide. This profession, which is despised by the Turks, is considered honourable in Persia. It is not taught in academical institutions as in Europe, but each of its professors takes a number of pupils, to whom he communicates the results of his experience.

Their system of practice is derived from the Greeks, and has descended to them with very little alteration. According to their theory, things are either hot or cold in certain degrees; and the only question they have to resolve is, whether the disease proceeds from too much heat or too much cold. Heat must be repelled by cold, and cold by heat. China-root with them is almost a sovereign remedy against all complaints.

When they administer it, the patient is confined to a room whence the smallest breath of air is to be carefully shut out, so that he not only suffers from his complaint, but also from intense heat. Tavernier mentions, that they give horse-flesh for the cholic; and Mr. Scott Waring was witness to nearly as curious an experiment. A poor man was violently afflicted with heart-burn, and instead of prescribing an internal medicine, they heaped on his breast a great quantity of ice and snow, which they said was an effectual cure. Kotzebue relates a similar instance, in the treatment of one of the musicians belonging to the Russian embassy. This man, being a Mahometan, had not sufficient confidence in the physician to the embassy, and desired that a Persian doctor might be called in. His disorder was an inflammatory fever. The Persian doctor appeared, and prescribed for the patient a large quantity of ice, which the poor fellow swallowed with ecstasy, and died on the third day.

In the country, physic is practised by men who stroll from village to village, and demand payment in advance for the medicines which they administer. Though they have in general but the most superficial notions of their art, they assume an importance and a tone of assurance which give the lower classes a high opinion of their skill. They are never at a loss, and you can never take them by surprise. Provided with a little bag, containing a few plants, drugs, and instruments, they give, at the moment of being consulted, a draught or an opiate, apply leeches or the cauter, bleed or send their patient to the bath or the gymnasium, without consideration or judgment, and without any motive for preferring one mode of treatment to the other.

The Mahometan religion, in prohibiting dissection, bars the way to all anatomical knowledge. Surgery, therefore, is in a worse state than medicine; and the skill of its professors is confined to the application of plasters to wounds, and leeches and the cauter to parts affected with pain, the reduction of a dislocated joint, and the opening of an external abscess.

In short, the sciences of medicine and surgery are with these people nothing but a trade; and they imagine they can acquire them with as little difficulty as their brothers learned to make a shoe or mend a shawl.

CHAPTER IV.

MUSIC.

WE are not acquainted with the origin and theory of the music of the Persians: it is to be presumed that they derived the science from India, but so much is certain that they communicated it to the Arabs and the Turks. The airs most admired at Constantinople are chiefly Persian. The theory, being connected with the mathematical sciences, has been treated of by several eminent philosophers, whose works have not yet been noticed in Europe, though some of them are to be found in our libraries.

Avicenna divides music into two parts; the *talif*, or music considered in the melody of the sounds; and the *ica*, which is the measured cessation of the melody. The tones are called *awaz*, and the semi-tones *nim*. These semi-tones are more numerous than ours, for the Persians divide the intervals into very small parts. The transition from one tone to another, by a series of progressions too minute for the system of our music, constitutes the principal charm and merit of theirs. The modes are written in circles; hence music is termed the science of circles. The spaces are called *kiah*, place: thus *yek-kiah* signifies the first space, *dow-kiah*, the second space, and so on as far as seven.

The Persian gamut exactly corresponds with ours. It consists of eight spaces; for in this gamut, the lines are not counted but only the spaces, the last of which answers to our octave. A very singular custom is that of assigning to each space a particular colour: thus, the *yek-kiah* is invariably green; the *dow-kiah*, rose-colour, and so on.

The Orientals have no notes, properly so called; but they employ letters, which they place between the lines, to indicate to the musician the interval in which he is to begin, the different tones which he has to run through, the duration of the sounds, the pauses, the time, and lastly the tone with which he is to finish. But the Persians do not always follow this practice. Their music is composed of modes or harmonious phrases, which take their names from persons or places, and serve as moulds for the productions of the imagination of their artists. These modes are either fundamental, to the number of four; or derived, eight in number; or compound, which vary to infinity. He is the most skilful musician who knows the most modes and the most airs; for then he avoids plagiarism, a charge which destroys the best-established reputation. The *zenkeleh* is the most melodious mode. The *ecchac* is appropriated to war and love.

The histories of the Shah Nameh are sung to the *rast*. Love-songs, elegies and hymns for the dead, are composed in the *puzurk*, the *zyr-afkend*, and the *rahavi*. *Zer-kechi*, or cloth of gold, denotes the richness or beauty of the mode which bears that denomination.

This want of notes is one of the great obstacles that must check the progress of music among the Persians. They have, it is true, some means of supplying the deficiency, such as the different names given to the tones and semi-tones, and the measure, which is divided like ours into perfect and imperfect time. At every concert, this measure is beaten by a musician placed in the first row, on his knees, or on a pair of small kettle-drums, called *naccareh*: in this manner he indicates the notes which we write down, and directs the orchestra. But a skilful master, without deviating from the measure, varies it by so many flourishes of art, sweet modulations, and imperceptible gradations, that it is sometimes impossible to be recognised.

There is a species of harmonious music, the theory of which is extremely simple, which affects the senses alone without reaching the heart, and produces only more or less pleasing sensations. There is another, which expresses all the passions, and which requires a profound study of the human heart, and of the springs by which it may be moved. To this last, the Persians are utter strangers; but on the other hand, they are very successful in harmonious music: with them, it delights, affects, and moves perhaps more than any other.

"We have heard," says M. Olivier, "military songs and airs which animated and powerfully excited the auditors; and we have heard others that awakened the most voluptuous ideas." The Persian songs, according to Mr. Scott Waring, are sweet and touching; but the great defect of this music is monotony: the impressions being constantly the same, they at length become wearisome and heavy, how pleasing soever they may have been at first. The Persian musician knows nothing of the rules of proportions, in the assortment of sounds; he has no idea of music in different parts, of the tone, divided into third, fifth, and octave; nor of what constitutes our counterpoint: hence, in a Persian concert there is neither bass, tenor, nor alt—all the instruments are in unison.

The instruments are very numerous, and may be divided into three classes, each distinguished by a generic name. To the first belong the stringed instruments, *aoud*; to the second, the wind instruments, *nefir*; and to the third, the instruments which are beaten, *thabl*. We shall confine our descriptions to the instruments which are most commonly used:—

Stringed Instruments.

The *baglama* or *tamboura*, which has but three strings, two of steel and one of brass. Round the handle are fastened catgut-strings, to render the sounds sharper.

The *tchekizdek*, which, according to Kämpfer, has sometimes eight and at others nine strings, which accord together, two and two; but when there are nine, the last three agree. The shape of this instrument is very remarkable.

The *kemantchek*, likewise called *rebab*, has sometimes three or four strings, though most frequently but two, one of which is set a third higher than the other. When well played, this instrument gives the sweetest sounds of any: it is played with a bow furnished with horse-hair. The handle is a cone, of elegant shape and carefully wrought, having as many pegs as there are strings. The body is circular, and about a span in diameter: it supports a bridge, and terminates in an iron style, a palm and a half in length. The instrument, including the handle and the foot, is about five palms long.

The *tchartar* has four strings, and is likewise played with a bow: the handle is short and narrow; the body oblong, very broad, and open at the upper end; the lower is much smaller, round, and closed by a little wooden bridge.

The *tchenk* is a kind of dulcimer with six strings, very common in Persia. The tchenk is touched with small curved sticks or feathers.

Wind Instruments.

The *nefir*, which has given its name to the instruments of this class, is a sort of straight trumpet, an ell in length, the sound of which is tolerably sweet.

The *carhana* is another kind of trumpet, of great length; the shortest being longer, according to Chardin, than the height of an ordinary man; some measure seven or eight feet. They are made of copper or brass, and are of unequal bulk; for the tube is very narrow to the distance of a foot from the mouth, which is from two to four inches in diameter. Thence downward it gradually increases in size, till at the base it is sometimes four feet in circumference. This trumpet cannot be played, unless it be supported for the musician; the sound which it gives corresponds with the dimensions of the instrument. When heard alone, it is harsh; but when accompanied by other instruments, it serves for a bass, and produces a pleasing effect.

The *shak-nefir*, or curved trumpet, is of copper and very large.

The *musicar* is nothing but the horn made by our tinmen.

Instruments of the class called Thabl.

The Persians have several kinds of drums :

The *dembal*, a kind of long drum which seems to have come from India.

The *dohol* resembles our military drum.

The *kous* is a large copper drum, about five feet high and nine or ten in circumference. It is used only in the army, and in caravans, to give the signal for departure.

The *naccareh*, a pair of kettle-drums joined together. The body of the *naccareh* is of copper. We have already observed, that this instrument is employed to beat the time.

The *thabli-baz*, or falcon drum, is so called because it is used in sporting to call back falcons which have been slipped. People of distinction, not excepting the king himself, carry them on the left side of the saddle. The *thabli-baz* is of copper.

There is also a kind of drum used by the inhabitants of Multan. It is of an oblong shape, and the body is made of wood. It is beaten at both ends, with the hands, and not with sticks.

The *dombek* is a drum used by the country people. It is a kind of earthen pot, having a foot by which the instrument is held under the arm : the head is covered with a stretched bladder or skin.

Tabors are called *def*, when furnished with rings, and *daireh*, when they have little bells. The latter are commonly four or five spans in circumference, and have four or five little copper bells which turn on an axis.

Sindi, or cymbals, are also used by the Persians ; and a little bell, resembling the bells attached to horses' heads in the western parts of England.



CHAPTER V.

DANCING.

AMONG the Persians, dancing is left almost entirely to females of the lowest class and the most depraved morals. A dancer and a courtesan are with them synonymous terms. In this art the Persian women display incomparable agility, and it is in this, rather than in the graceful combination of their steps and motions, that their talent consists.

From the accounts of the most recent travellers, it would appear, that it is men chiefly, or rather boys, and not females, who follow the profession of dancing for the amusement of the great,

whose entertainments generally conclude with this kind of exhibition. Kotzebue, who, by the bye, seems to have carried with him to Persia some very obstinate Russian prejudices, which we shrewdly suspect to have led him to overcharge many of his descriptions relative to that country, gives a ludicrous picture of the performances of a company of dancers employed on such an occasion by the serdar of Erivan.

Their music, says he, consisted of a guitar, a sort of violin with three strings, two tambourines, and a singer. The latter with frightful grimaces strained his throat, apparently in strong convulsions; fortunately for us, however, he frequently covered his face, according to the custom of the country, with a piece of paper, and spared us the sight of his hideous grimaces. The musicians did not play out of tune, but still the effect of the whole sounded not unlike a concert of cats. Three handsome boys, clothed in long garments and decorated with silk ribbons of different colours, were so inspired by this discordant music and the screams of the singer, that they began dancing and throwing themselves into various attitudes. They had small metal castanets, which they struck in time with the dance. I believe that two of these youths were meant to represent females, because their motions were slower and more modest; but the third boy tumbled about most furiously, turning alternately to each of the others. The most ludicrous part of the entertainment, however, was to follow. The music suddenly rose to a loud pitch, the singer screamed unmercifully, and the three boys tumbled in somersets to the extremity of the hall; where two of them remained in a graceful attitude, while the third stood upon his head showing his pantaloons and naked feet. There was one particular feat, which the dancers performed with great address: they turned several times in the air, without touching the ground with their hands or feet.



CHAPTER VI.

ARCHITECTURE, PAINTING, AND SCULPTURE.

THE Persians never attained a high degree of perfection in painting and sculpture. The figures at Persepolis, and in other monuments of antiquity in Fars, are extremely defective, both in regard to taste and proportions. In the structures at Kerman-shah, the arts display superior excellence; but those appear to have been the work of Greek or Roman artists. At the present day, sculpture is so utterly neglected by the Persians, that it is

doubtful whether there is a single statue in the whole kingdom.

In their paintings, nature and taste are always violated. They sacrifice grace and expression to brilliancy of colouring: they have some little knowledge of light and shade, but know nothing of perspective. It is no common thing in a Persian painting to see a man nearly as tall as a mountain; or in their representations of a battle, a line of guns, on which is formed a line of infantry, and over that a line of cavalry. The Persian artists are nevertheless very happy at catching a likeness, and paint portraits better than any thing else. Those who paint landscapes generally study some daub sent out from England, or perhaps from China; and these they look upon as masterpieces. They give the preference to our figures, but consider the colouring of the Chinese as much superior.

It is in the decoration of walls and ceilings, that their talents are most conspicuous. Their paintings commonly represent some subject of ancient history, such as the achievements of Roustam, the loves of Shireen and Khosru, or remarkable actions of princes of modern times. Their only merit consists in furnishing faithful likenesses of the persons whom they portray; as works of art, they are quite contemptible, merely exhibiting a confused multitude of disproportioned figures of men and horses intermingled in the most ridiculous manner.

In architecture, as well as sculpture, the ancient Persians surpassed their descendants. Such at least is the opinion we are authorized to form by the ruins of Persepolis, Shuster, and Kendjaver, and the remains of the palace of Khosru, and the ancient Ctesiphon. The principal architectural works of the present day are the domes and minarets of the mosques. The ceilings and the domes are so rich and so exquisitely finished as to excite astonishment, and it is frequently the case that more labour and expense are bestowed on the decoration of a ceiling than on all the rest of the edifice to which it belongs.

The most magnificent of the remains of antiquity in Persia, from which some inference may be drawn respecting the state of architecture in that country two or three thousand years ago, are indisputably the ruins of Persepolis. They are situated in the plain of Merdasht, one of the most fertile in Persia, to the left of the road leading from Ispahan to Shiraz. Let the reader figure to himself the side of a mountain of the hardest marble, presenting an unequal area or platform, 1200 feet in length and 1690 in depth, cut perpendicularly, and surrounded with a wall faced with marble, 4000 feet in circumference. Let the imagination place on this terrace porticoes, columns, walls, flights of steps, the whole of marble, without any apparent mixture of

stone : edifices vying in dimensions, and in the majesty of their details, with the most perfect works of antiquity extant ; aqueducts hewn out of the solid rock ; lastly, a mountain cut perpendicularly throughout its whole length, and forming its eastern wall. Such was in past ages the general appearance of the temple or palace of Persepolis. The genius of destruction now hovers round this terrace ; earthquakes have changed the face of it ; the hand of man has assiduously overthrown what they had spared : the eye now discovers nothing but fragments of walls, detached door-ways ; columns, partly in ruin ; the ground strewn with fragments of shafts, capitals and blocks of marble ; while heaps of sand and dust are daily covering more and more of these structures, whose remaining masses astonish the imagination. The mosque, the *caravanserai*, and the dwelling of the Persian, are decorated with their spoils ; the names of the Musulman conqueror and of the European traveller are placed beside those inscriptions, the origin, signification and wedge-shaped characters of which will exercise to no purpose the sagacity of the learned. The aqueducts are become receptacles of rain-water, or the haunts of noxious animals ; the camel and the mule crop the wild herbage that grows among the ruins ; while the stork peacefully builds her nest on the column of the temple of the deity, or of the palace of kings.

Sufficient remains are yet left, to prove that the Persians had carried architecture to a high degree of perfection long before the Greeks. The figures which adorn the surface of all the walls, if not sculptured according to the strict rules of design and perspective, nevertheless bespeak an able and experienced hand. Their number, throughout the whole of the ruins, is estimated at about 1300.

The ruins of Persepolis are now known by several denominations, as *Takhti-Djemshid*, Throne of Djemshid ; *Kanshi-Dara*, House of Dara, or Darius ; *Hezar soutoun*, the thousand Columns ; *Tchehel-minar*, the forty Columns. The last two of these denominations express by a precise number a considerable but undetermined number of columns. The oriental historians are not agreed respecting the founder of these magnificent structures : the most generally received opinion attributes them to Djemshid, a sovereign of the Pishdadian dynasty. The principal figure, which occurs several times on the walls, is even said to represent that great monarch ; but as the ancients frequently ascribed to one man the exploits of several to form a hero or a demigod, so the Persians are accustomed to refer to some eminent Pishdadian prince the foundation of cities the origin of which is unknown. It cannot therefore be assumed as a fact, that the structures of Persepolis were erected by Djemshid.

The same observation applies to the statement of the writers who attribute the colonnades to Homai, the Persian Semiramis.

As to the nature of the entire edifice, some argue from the figures on the walls that it was a temple, others a palace: for these figures sometimes represent a kind of procession, in which some have thought they discovered traces of the fire-worship; at others, a monarch seated on his throne, guards, combats, &c. These opposite opinions might perhaps be reconciled, by supposing that the platform contained both a temple and a palace.

A curious specimen of the architecture of the middle age is found at the ruinous city of Sultania, in an unfinished building, begun by Sultan Mahomed Khodabund in the 14th century, as a shrine for the remains of the caliph Ali and his son Hossein, which he intended to translate thither from their former burial-place, and thus make Sultania a point of future pilgrimage for the faithful of his own empire, as Medina had heretofore been for Musulmans in general. The sultan, however, did not live to complete his design, and his own ashes occupied the place.

The centre of this once splendid but now mouldering edifice, is surmounted by a dome upwards of 130 feet in height. The whole interior of the building presents one uninterrupted space; but to the south is a large distinct chamber, choked up with rubbish, under the floor of which, as Sir R. Porter was informed, are three immense vaulted rooms, the entrance to which is buried under the superincumbent rubbish, and in one of which stands the tomb of the founder. The inside of the whole mosque is beautifully painted, and tiled with varied porcelain. Much gilding is yet to be seen upon the upright and transverse lines of decoration, among which it is said the whole Koran is written in ornamented characters; but it requires a Musulman's eye to find it out, in the labyrinth of arabesque patterns by which it is surrounded. The whole building was formerly inclosed within a square of 300 yards. All the proportions and decorations of this vast structure are in the most splendid Asiatic taste; but the blue, green, and golden tiles, with which it has been coated, are rapidly disappearing; yet enough remains to give an idea of the original beauty of the whole.

In illustration of the present state of architecture in Persia, we shall subjoin a brief account of two palaces erected within these few years by the reigning sovereign.

The first of these, *Takhti-Cadjar*, the throne of the Cadjar, is situated two miles north-east of Teheran. If it does not display that royal magnificence which characterizes the edifices erected by the Sofis, still it cannot be denied that the situation and still more the arrangement of this summer-palace render it a truly delightful retreat.

Takhti-Cadjar, when viewed at a distance, appears to be of prodigious height: but as you approach it the illusion is dispelled, and what you took for stories of one and the same building, are found to be terraces raised one above another. The entrance is a simple gateway, surmounted by a pavilion: it leads into a spacious court, the middle of which is occupied by a principal alley, bordered on each side by young cypresses and poplars, and intersected at right angles in its centre by a stone canal. Here runs a stream of limpid water, which forms several well-contrived cascades. The first terrace supports an octagon building, open on all sides in piazzas, and the ceiling of which is supported by pillars. The floor is crossed by a stream, which comes from the top of the building, and passes along all the terraces, forming several waterfalls. This little edifice, though of rude materials and its decorations bad, is built on an excellent plan, well adapted to afford shelter from the heat of summer. Under the building are subterraneous apartments. From this terrace you proceed to another, on which stands a pleasure-house of great extent, likewise well arranged for summer, but not on so good a plan as the preceding. The stream mentioned above passes through this house also, before which there is a square sheet of water. This terrace leads to several others, much more elevated than the first, and the platform of which is occupied by reservoirs only. At length you reach the principal habitation, composed, like all the Persian houses, of a quadrangular court, around which is a series of halls and apartments of different dimensions, for various purposes. But the most agreeable part of the Takhti-Cadjar, is a pavilion or belvidere at the top. It is built in a simple style, but highly decorated, and commands a most delicious view. The ablest native artists have been employed to adorn this retreat with paintings, mosaic-work, and varnishing; and it is worthy of remark, that here are to be seen the portraits of several European ladies, among those of Persian females. The windows are admirably painted; the doors, of exquisite workmanship, are lined with quotations from the poets engraved upon ivory. On the walls of the other apartments, are to be seen several portraits of the sovereign and of his female favourites.

Takhti-Cadjar is built entirely of brick, and a wall of mud mixed with chopped straw encompasses this royal habitation.

The Negauristan is another royal palace, in the same direction, but only half a mile distant from the city. Its proximity, as well as its superior beauty, often induces the Shah to walk thither, to enjoy relaxation from the cares and ceremonies of state. The general character of the garden is like that of Takhti-Cadjar, only the grand avenue is much wider, and is ter-

minated at the higher extremity by a view of the palace, while a temple appears here also between the spacious arcade of trees. Narrow secluded walks shaded above and enamelled with flowers below, with cuts of clear and sparkling water, silvering the ground and cooling the air, vary the scene from parts which neglect, or taste assuming graceful negligence, has left in a state of romantic wildness. The trees are all full grown and luxuriant in foliage, while their lofty stems, nearly covered by a rich underwood of roses, lilac, and other fragrant and aromatic shrubs, form the finest natural tapestry of leaves and flowers.

On my first entering this bower of fairy land, says Sir Robert Porter, I was struck with the appearance of two rose-trees full fourteen feet high, laden with thousands of flowers, in every degree of expansion, and of a bloom and delicacy of scent that imbued the whole atmosphere with exquisite perfume. Indeed, I believe that in no country of the world does the rose grow in such perfection as in Persia; in no country is it so cultivated and prized by the natives. Their gardens and courts are crowded by its plants, their rooms ornamented with vases filled with its gathered bunches, and every bath strewn with the full-blown flowers plucked from the ever-replenished stems. Even the humblest individual, who pays a piece of copper money for a few whiffs of a *kallioun*, feels a double enjoyment when he finds it stuck with a bud of his dear native tree. But in this delicious garden of Negauristan, the eye and the smell are not the only senses regaled by the presence of the rose. The ear is enchanted by the wild and beautiful notes of multitudes of nightingales, whose warblings seem to increase in melody and softness with the unfolding of their favourite flowers. Here, indeed, the stranger is more powerfully reminded, that he is in the genuine country of the nightingale and the rose.

At the upper end of the garden is a small and fantastically built palace, inclosed in a little paradise of sweets. The Shah often retires thither for days together at the beginning of summer, before he removes to more distant and temperate regions, and, accompanied by the females of his family, forgets awhile that life or the world have other seasons than the gay and lovely spring. This building is of light architecture, nearly circular, full of elegant apartments, brilliantly adorned with gilding, arabesques, looking-glasses, and flowers, natural and painted in every quarter. Some of the largest saloons are additionally ornamented with pictures; portraits of the Shah and his sons, of the chief personages at court, also of foreign ministers, and among the rest Sir John Malcolm, Sir Harford Jones, Sir Gore Ouseley, General Gardanne, &c. all portrayed in high costume

and like one and the same original. The carpets and *nummuds* of these apartments are of the most delicate fabric.

But the place of greatest attraction to an oriental taste is the summer-bath. This bath-saloon, or court, is circular, with a vast basin in the centre, of pure white marble, of the same shape, and about sixty or seventy feet in diameter. This is filled with the clearest water, sparkling in the sun, for its only canopy is the vault of heaven; but rose-trees, with other pendent shrubs bearing flowers, cluster near it, and at times their waving branches throw a beautifully quivering shade over the excessive brightness of the water. Round the sides of the court are two ranges, one above another, of little chambers looking towards the bath, and furnished with every refinement of the harem. These are for the accommodation of the ladies, who accompany the Shah during his occasional sojourns at the Negauristan. The royal master frequently takes his noontide repose in one of the upper chambers which encircle the saloon of the bath; and, if he be inclined, he has only to turn his eyes to the scene below, to behold the loveliest objects of his tenderness sporting like naiads in the crystal stream, and glowing in all the bloom and brilliancy which belong to Asiatic youth. In such a bath-court, it is probable that Bathsheba was seen by the enamoured king of Israel. As he was "walking at eventide on the roof of his palace," he might undesignedly have strolled far enough to overlook the *anderoon* of his women, where the beautiful wife of Uriah, visiting the royal wives, might have joined them, as is often the custom of these countries, in the delights of the bath.

A brief notice of a very extraordinary natural phenomenon will scarcely be deemed an inappropriate conclusion to this chapter, inasmuch as it relates to the production of a material employed in the principal buildings of Persia.

Near the village of Shirameen, not far from the lake of Shahee, are ponds or plashes, whose indolent waters, by a slow and regular process, stagnate, concrete and petrify, and produce the beautiful transparent stone, commonly called *Tabreez* marble, so remarkable in most of the burial-places in Persia, and which forms a chief ornament in all the buildings of note throughout the country. These ponds, which are situated close to one another, are contained in the circumference of about half a mile, and their position is marked by confused heaps of stone which have accumulated as the excavations have increased. On approaching the spot, says Mr. Morier, the ground has a hollow sound, with a particularly dreary and calcined appearance, and when upon it, a strong mineral smell arises from the ponds. The process of petrification is to be traced from its first beginning to its termination. In one part the water was clear, in a

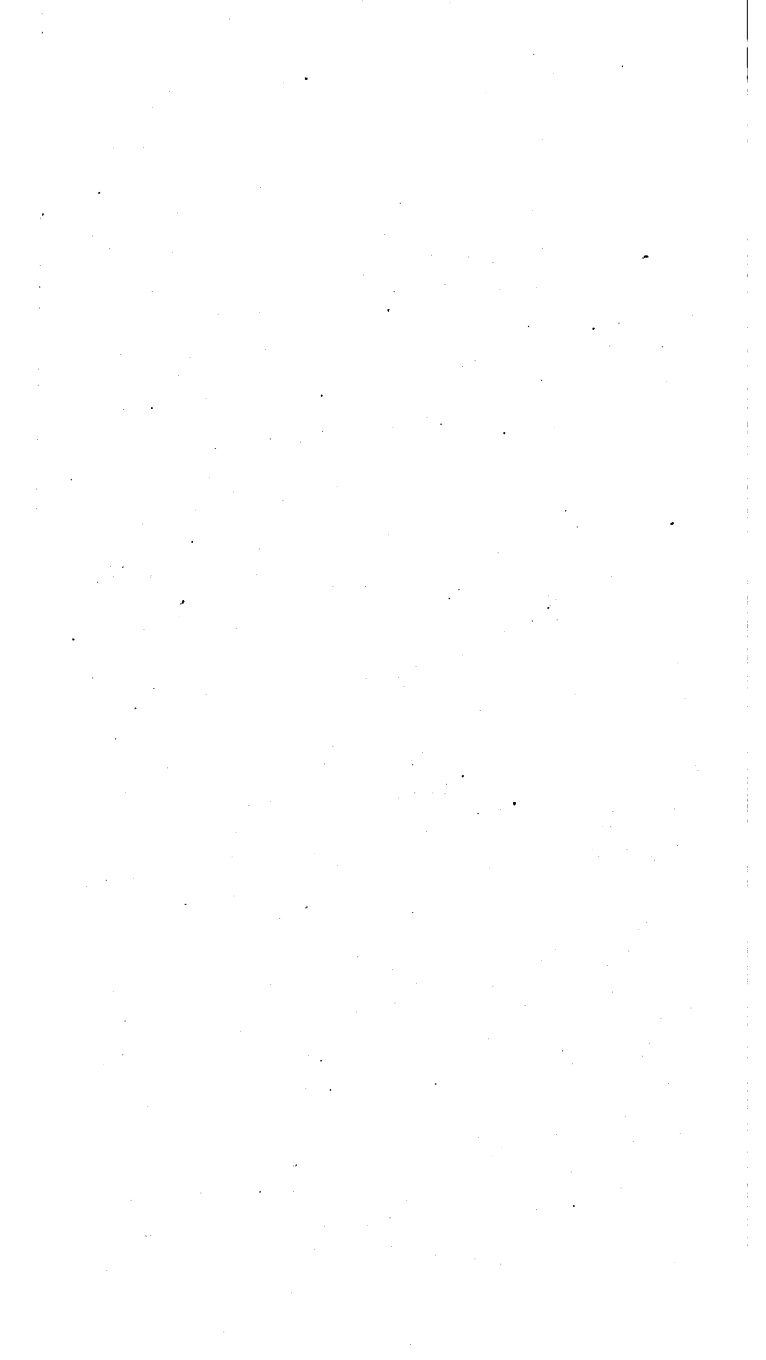
second it appears thicker and stagnant, in a third quite black, and in its last stage white like hoar-frost. Indeed, a petrified pond looks like frozen water; and before the operation is quite finished, a stone slightly thrown upon it breaks the outer coating, and causes the black water underneath to exude. Where the operation is complete, a stone makes no impression, and a man may walk on it without wetting his shoes.

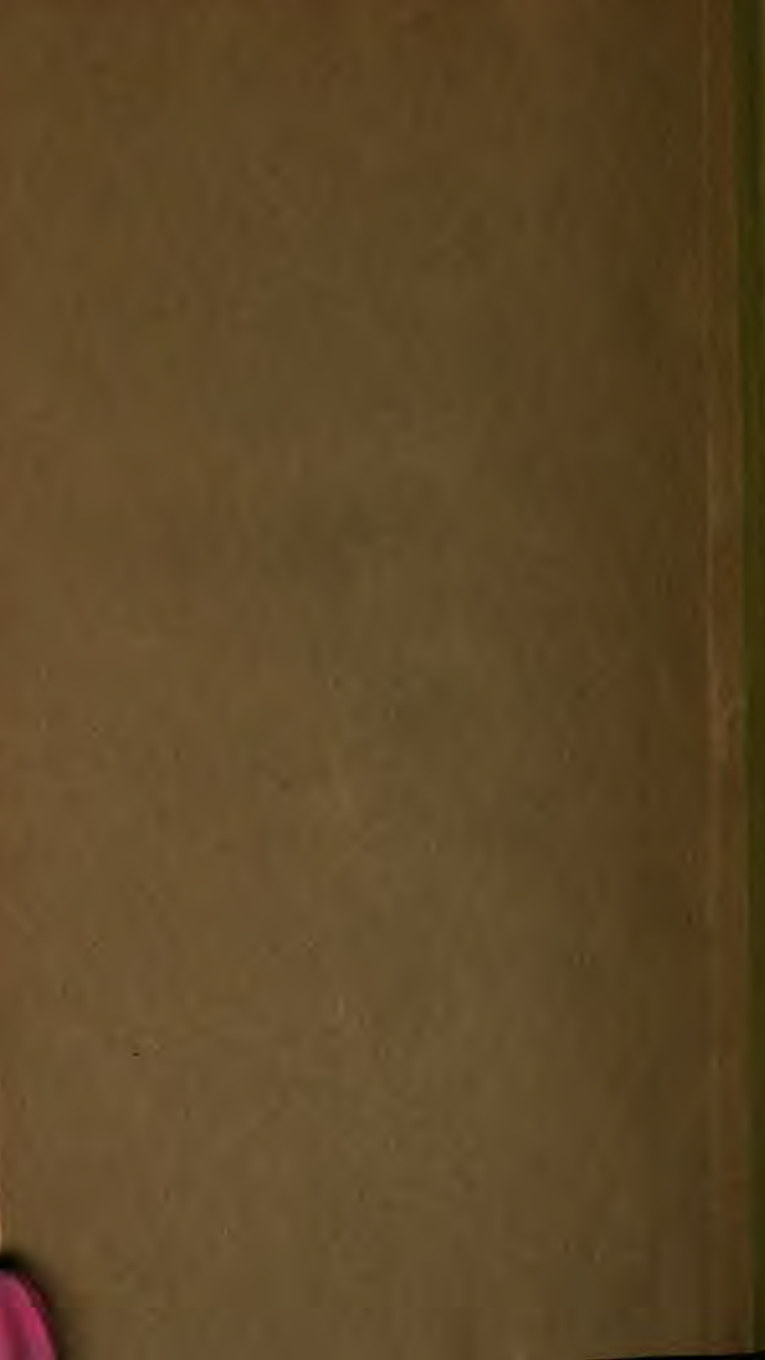
Wherever the petrification has been hewn into, the curious progress of the concretion is clearly seen, and shows itself like sheets of rough paper placed one over the other in accumulated layers. Such is the constant tendency of this water to become stone, that where it exudes from the ground in bubbles, the petrification assumes a globular shape, as if the bubbles of a spring, by a stroke of magic, had been arrested in their play and metamorphosed into marble. These stony bubbles, which form the most curious specimens of this extraordinary quarry, frequently contain portions of the earth through which the water has oozed. The substance thus produced is brittle, transparent, and sometimes very richly streaked with green, red, and copper-coloured veins. It admits of being cut into immense slabs, and takes a good polish.

The present royal family of Persia, whose princes do not spend large sums in building, have not carried away much of this stone; but some immense slabs, cut for Nadir Shah, and now lying neglected among innumerable fragments, show the object that he had in view. None but the king, his sons, and persons privileged by special firman, are permitted to excavate; and such is the ascendancy of pride over avarice, that the scheme of farming it to the highest bidder does not seem to have ever come within the calculation of its present possessors.

THE END.







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